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Nick Carter Stories

THE PIRATE YACHT

OR

Nick Carter's Trail of Diamonds

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THE PIRATE YACHT;

Or, NICK CARTER'S TRAIL OF DIAMONDS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

MRS. VAN D.'S JEWELS.

"That yacht is a pirate, I tell you."

"What do you mean, Mr. Carter?"

"Exactly what I say. She does not fly the skull and crossbones at her peak. But she might as well. You know that as well as I, Mr. Mallory."

"No, I don't," was James Mallory's short disclaimer. "Don't try to bring me into it, please."

Nick Carter glanced with disgust at the puffy face before him, but did not take the trouble to reply.

"You have your point of view as a distinguished criminal investigator," went on Mallory. "But it may not be mine, as one of the owners of the Hotel Amsterdam, here on the coast of Delaware. It is true that somebody—we don't know who—persuaded Mrs. de Puyster van Dietrich, one of our guests, to visit that yacht, and that you concluded she had been kidnaped."

"What was your conclusion?" demanded Nick Carter sharply.

"I didn't express an opinion. I sent for you, as a detective, to find out where she had gone, when we found she had disappeared from her rooms in this hotel, and you discovered her on that yacht."

"Held a prisoner," remarked Carter.

"You didn't prove that, Mr. Carter."

"No, I did not prove it. I concede that assertion."

"And when Mr. Jared Spanner showed, to my satisfaction, as well as to that of my partner, Mr. Paul Savage, that he had not known the lady was on board until you brought her out, we could only accept his word."

The detective shrugged his shoulders.

"Now Mr. Spanner threatens to sue us for damages," continued Mallory ruefully. "He says that, under pretense of believing Mrs. van Dietrich had been kidnaped, we sent a number of men aboard to capture the yacht unlawfully, caused the death of the first mate, and injured several of the crew. In addition to all that, we made prisoners of himself, the owner, and the captain of the vessel."

"Mrs. van Dietrich was on board the yacht. They can't get away from that."

"Anyhow, Spanner swears he will make it hot for us—unless we settle out of court."

"Bosh!" was Nick Carter's scornful comment.

"It may seem bosh to you," grumbled Mallory. "But if once it gets abroad that we've had all this trouble, we might as well close the hotel. We cater to an exclusive and wealthy class, remember, and they shrink from vulgar notoriety."

"It is three days since we found Mrs. van Dietrich on board the yacht, and there has been nothing done in the way of legal proceedings so far," Nick reminded him. "I am going aboard that yacht in the morning on my own responsibility."

"What for?"

"I am going to make Jared Spanner give me a better explanation of Mrs. van Dietrich's presence there than he has. He intimates that she was in a somnambulistic state when she came to the yacht in one of the hotel skiffs."

"One of our skiffs was afterward found tossing about the bay, and it came ashore down there by the golf links."

"You don't really believe that yarn, do you, Mr. Mallory?"

"It seems reasonable. Mr. Spanner declares that two men rowed Mrs. van Dietrich, fast asleep, to the yacht and helped her up the ladder to the deck. Then they went away, and Spanner has not seen them since."

"Of course he hasn't," rejoined Nick. "You think, I suppose, that she took all her jewelry with her, too?"

"She had it all in her cabin when she woke up and was ready to leave the yacht, and then she brought it ashore."

"She did not take it with her," declared the detective positively. "Do you account in the same way for all the jewelry belonging to Lord Vinton being found in the pockets of Kennedy, the first mate, when his body was recovered?"

"No. The case of Lord Vinton, and also of Mr. Drago, was a different thing. That was Kennedy's doings, with the assistance of that other man, Groton. Jared Spanner cannot be held responsible for his employees when they play such tricks as those, Mr. Carter."

The detective did not say anything for a few minutes. He could see that, for his own purposes, it was the desire of James Mallory to gloss over certain outrages that had been committed in the hotel and its surrounding grounds three nights before, and he found himself wondering if, by any chance, Mallory and his partner had been concerned in those crimes.

When he spoke again it was in tones almost accusatory.

"Harvey L. Drago was attacked in the woods as he was returning to the hotel after playing golf, and was held a prisoner there, blindfolded, by some men he did not recognize afterward, until night, when he was taken to a boat on the shore of the bay. You know all that, don't you, Mr. Mallory?"

"Yes. That is the story. There is another one that Lord Vinton was poisoned by gas in his bedroom after being asleep for some time, and was carried out of the hotel without being seen, to the same boat that was to convey Mr. Drago to the yacht," returned James Mallory. "I can't say that the Drago affair did not happen. As for Vinton, he was gone. Nobody knows where."

"He left about ten thousand dollars' worth of jewelry behind him—in Kennedy's pocket, didn't he?" asked Nick Carter.

"Yes."

"Where is that jewelry now?"

"In a safe in our private office," replied Savage. "Mrs. van Dietrich's diamonds are in a safe there, too—a hundred thousand dollars' worth of them. We tried to persuade her to put them in a safe-deposit vault in Philadelphia. But she is a peculiar woman, with ideas of her own that are not easily changed. She said she wanted them in our safe, and nothing else would satisfy her."

"Well?"

"We gave her the entire use of a safe, so that she could have her own combination put on the lock. We would not take the responsibility of so much valuable property in a small parcel. It would be too easy for a thief to hide it if he ever got it into his possession."

"The safe is a good one, isn't it?" asked Nick.

"Yes," put in Mallory hastily. "Quite new and of modern design. It was put in just before the hotel was ready to open. We have not used it much, because we have another.

"We intended to keep the front one specially for the use of guests who wished to place their jewelry or money in safety while in the hotel," added Savage.

Nick Carter and James Mallory were sitting in the café of the Hotel Amsterdam after luncheon, both with cigars in their mouths. It was as quiet a corner as they could find without going to a private room, and Nick wanted to find out what Mallory intended to do about the yacht which he was so sure was a piratical craft.

The detective saw he was in a difficult position. He was well aware that Mallory and Savage dreaded any publicity, and were trying to smooth things over. But Nick could not make it conform to his sense of duty to allow the escape of the rascals responsible for the outrage on Mrs. van Dietrich on that account.

He did not say any more now, however, for it happened that Mallory was called away on some business connected with the hotel.

Nick remained in his comfortable leather-cushioned seat to finish his cigar.

"Valeria has got away for the present," he ruminated. "That is the only thing that might make me hold my hand. I am convinced she was at the bottom of it all. In fact, I saw enough to be sure of it. As for the ridiculous statement of Mrs. van D. that she might have got to the yacht in a somnambulistic state, it only shows how a weak-minded woman can be led into believing things."

He had sat smoking for another five minutes before an alert-looking young man hurried into the café and sat down by his side without speaking.

It was the eminent detective's confidential assistant.

"Well, Chick! What have you found out?"

"The old woman's sparklers are gone!" replied Chick, out of the corner of his mouth.

"What old woman?"

"Mrs. van Dietrich."

"Where are they gone?" asked Nick, adding: "Come out with your story straight. No half confidences, Chick."

"I don't want to give you half confidences. But you said I wasn't to let it be known I was your assistant if I could help it. That's why I haven't been here before. You had Mallory stuck to you for half an hour."

"That's true, Chick," replied the detective. "There is so much mystery around this hotel that I think we can do better work in getting to the bottom of it if people don't know we are closely associated. But we can appear to be acquaintances, as two men in the same summer hotel are likely to be."

"I didn't know how much you wanted to be acquainted," returned Chick, with a dry grin. "You still call yourself Colonel Pearson, don't you?"

"Yes."

"And I am to use my own name, Chickering Carter?"

"Yes. You are not so well known as I am. I am glad to see that you are particular about your dress. You look like the son of a rich father," smiled the detective. "Now tell me what you mean by Mrs. van Dietrich's sparklers being gone. Has she lost some of her jewelry?"

"Some of it?" exclaimed Chick. "She's lost all of it!"

"It's in the safe, isn't it?"

"No. That's just it. The whole collection was put in a safe in the managers' private office, and now it's gone. Somebody has pinched every nickel's worth. In fact——"

But Chick was talking to the empty air. Nick Carter had gone!

CHAPTER II.

THE NEW MAID.

When Nick Carter entered the private office of the managers of the hotel, James Mallory, who responded in person to his knock, whispered to him to say nothing until he had heard the story Mrs. van Dietrich was telling.

The detective did not answer. He was too much interested in the good lady's recital.

"I put all my diamonds, with other jewelry, in these two drawers in the safe," she was wailing, while tears rolled down her plump cheeks and left dark streaks in the powder. "You see that they are both empty."

"Did you lock the safe?" put in Nick Carter.

"Yes."

"How did you lock it?"

"Why, by turning the knob several times and then trying the safe to see whether the door would open," she replied, rather indignantly. "I assure you, Colonel Pearson, I know how to lock a safe."

"I never doubted that, Mrs. van Dietrich. But it is possible that you might have forgotten to do it at all."

"I did not forget. I never forget anything," she snapped. "At least, not while I am awake."

The detective was quick to take up this admission.

"But, when you are asleep, you have a tendency to somnambulism, and you forget afterward things you may have done in your sleep?"

"Mrs. van Dietrich was not in this room in her sleep, Colonel Pearson," put in a quiet feminine voice.

Nick Carter turned quickly. Although the tones were not entirely familiar, there was a peculiar cadence that struck him as having been heard before.

He found himself looking into the rather weary countenance of a middle-aged woman, whose white hair was drawn down neatly on either side of her deeply lined forehead, and whose dress was that of a maid. She wore rimless spectacles, through which a pair of very bright eyes seemed to be taking in everything around her in one comprehensive glance.

"My maid, Mrs. Parker," explained Mrs. van Dietrich. "She knows what my movements have been for the past two days. She has been constantly in attendance on me."

"For two days?" remarked Nick questioningly.

"Yes. My other maid, Mary Cook, has left me. She would not stay in my rooms at night. She wanted to be downstairs, chatting and giggling with the girls of the hotel. If she had been with me the night I walked in my sleep and did not wake till I found myself in that yacht, it never would have happened."

"That is true," put in Paul Savage, the cadaverous partner of James Mallory, with a regretful shake of the head.

"So Mrs. van Dietrich very wisely got rid of her maid, and was fortunate enough to find another without delay," explained Mallory. "This Mrs. Parker had come to apply for a position here. We would have put her on our staff as assistant housekeeper. But Mrs. van Dietrich wanted her, and of course we were only too glad to oblige one of our guests."

James Mallory's big face broke into a greasy smile, and he bowed low, with his hand over that part of his expansive white waistcoat where he believed his heart to be.

"You are sure that Mrs. van Dietrich was not down here after she put the jewelry in the safe?" asked Nick of the new maid.

"Only in the daytime, when I was with her. She put her things in the safe the day before yesterday."

"The day you were engaged by her?" suggested Nick.

"The same day," replied Mrs. Parker, somewhat spitefully. "I brought very good references with me when I came to apply for a position. Mr. Mallory will answer for that, and so will Mrs. van Dietrich."

There seemed no real reason for the maid to talk about her references at this particular moment. But she had discerned a shade of suspicion in the detective's tone when he made his last remark, and she was quick to accept the challenge—if it was one.

Nick Carter bowed gravely in acknowledgment of Mrs. Parker's defense of her integrity.

"Do you know if she visited the safe at all afterward?" he asked gently.

"Yes. She came first, the night before last, to get some ornaments she wore at dinner and during the dance that followed. She put them back the next morning, about ten o'clock. I was with her."

"You were with her?"

"Yes," snapped Mrs. Parker. "And Mr. Mallory and Mr. Savage were also in the room, and saw Mrs. van Dietrich return the jewelry and lock the safe door. Both of them spoke to Mrs. van Dietrich, and Mr. Savage walked over to the safe, and tried the door in her presence."

"Why did he do that?"

"It's a habit of mine," put in Savage. "I often try our own safe when I happen to be near it, in the same way. I do it without thinking."

"When was the loss of the jewels discovered?" asked Nick.

"Just now," replied Mrs. Parker. "Mrs. van Dietrich came in to take out some articles she intended to wear this evening. She found the drawers as you see them."

"Open."

"No. Closed; but empty."

"Unlocked?"

"Yes. But the drawers were evidently forced with some sort of tool," put in Mrs. van Dietrich. "When I put my key in the lock, it turned as usual. But I found afterward that the steel socket had been broken away."

Nick bent over to examine the locks, and he saw that they had both been drilled, and then torn apart with a safe-breaking instrument of some kind.

Incidentally, the detective glanced sharply over the safe and saw that it was very far from being the modern article described by James Mallory.

"This safe was made fifteen or twenty years ago," murmured Nick. "And it never was a first-class one, even then."

"Has any one the combination of the safe besides yourself, Mrs. van Dietrich?" he asked, over his shoulder, as he still bent in front of the safe.

"Nobody. I have kept it strictly to myself. The safe workman who put it in has it, of course, because he gave it to me. But he has gone back to New York long ago. Besides——"

"He is out of the question," interrupted Nick. "You haven't written this combination of figures down on a piece of paper, or in a notebook, have you?"

"No. The man from the safe manufacturer's warned me not to do that. But I should not have done it anyhow. That would have been stupid."

Mrs. van Dietrich evidently prided herself on her acumen in this respect. She liked to think of herself as a good business woman.

"You are sure you have not told anybody how to open

the safe—somebody whom it might have convenienced you to know it——"

"She never has told me, sir," broke in Mrs. Parker, her eyes glittering through her spectacles. "That must be what you mean. It is a shame that, whenever anything is lost in a family or by an employer of respectable men and women, the first suspicion is that it is what the police call an 'inside job.' I only want to say that if Mrs. van Dietrich cannot trust me—or feels that she cannot—why——"

Mrs. Parker took out a handkerchief and put it to the corners of her eyes under her glasses, while her respectable bosom heaved indignantly.

"Parker has my entire confidence," declared Mrs. van Dietrich warmly. "I must request that, when you get detectives here to look into the matter, Mr. Mallory, you will leave her out of consideration."

"Very well, Mrs. van Dietrich. Colonel Pearson did not mean to cast suspicion on anybody, I know. I have only asked him to hear how your jewelry has been stolen because he is a friend of ours, and because he has made something of a study of criminology—in an amateur way."

"I see," said Mrs. van Dietrich. "If he had been a regular detective, no doubt he would have taken a different view. Would it not be possible to get that wonderful detective I've heard about—Nicholas Carter?"

"He is very expensive, Mrs. van Dietrich," objected Savage. "But he might help. We'll send for him if you like. Of course, we are not responsible for your loss, because it was expressly stipulated that, in giving you a private safe, we should not be answerable for your property. If it had been in our own safe, to which we have access, it would have been different."

"I understand that," returned Mrs. van Dietrich stiffly. "But——"

"Of course, we shall do our best to recover the property," interposed James Mallory hurriedly. "I have no doubt that when we get Mr. Carter on the case, the mystery will soon be solved——"

"And I shall get my jewelry?" asked Mrs. van Dietrich. "Do you realize that I value it at a hundred thousand dollars?"

Mallory whistled softly, and immediately begged the lady's pardon.

"I was thinking what a splendid collection it must be," he explained. "And I could not help it. Our aim will be mainly to recover the property. The punishing of the thief will be only a secondary consideration. I must beg of you not to say anything about the robbery. You can see that if it should be talked about, it would enable the person or persons guilty to keep a line on what we are doing."

"If I don't get my property back I don't know what I shall do," cried Mrs. van Dietrich, giving free way to her tears. It is not only the intrinsic value. Many of the pieces were gifts from my dear late husband. They never could be replaced. Come on, Mrs. Parker. I can't bear to talk any longer. I put all my trust in you, Mr. Mallory—and Mr. Savage, too, of course."

She bowed slightly to Colonel Pearson and went out with her new maid.

"I don't see why they let that Colonel Pearson know anything about it, Parker," grumbled Mrs. van Dietrich, as the two entered her bedroom on the fourth floor. "He is only an amateur, and he may interfere with the regular detectives."

"He seems to know a great deal about detective work," protested Mrs. Parker, as she began to let down her mistress' hair in front of the mirror on the dresser. "He found you on the yacht."

"Nonsense, Mrs. Parker!" snapped her employer. "He did not find anything. He got the wrong idea altogether, and the shameful way he talked to Mr. Spanner and to the captain—a delightful man—was unspeakable. I hope he will have to pay heavily for his absurd and brutal behavior."

"I think he will, ma'am," returned Mrs. Parker.

As the quiet-mananered Mrs. Parker said this, she had occasion to move to one side, so that her face was no longer reflected in the mirror where Mrs. van Dietrich could observe it.

The smile that passed over the middle-aged maid's countenance might have made her mistress wonder what amused her.

CHAPTER III.

MALLORY MAKES A THREAT.

"Now, what do you make of it, Mr. Carter?" asked Savage, when Mrs. van Dietrich and her maid had gone from the office.

"I am not prepared to say," was the detective's reply. "I don't jump at conclusions as rapidly as that. I must have time to investigate, and it may take me some days, or even longer."

"But you must have some suspicions?" interrupted Mallory impatiently. "I can't help suspecting that maid. She is so smooth that I doubt her honesty."

"But Mrs. van Dietrich said her references were unimpeachable, and you seemed to agree with her."

"That's true. But if the maid didn't do it, who did? She would be the only person likely to get hold of the combination. Her mistress may have dropped it accidentally, although she does not think so."

"There is nothing pointing to the maid that I can see," replied Nick. "But if you will let me alone for a day or two, I may be able to help. It is well that no one in the hotel knows who I am except you and Mr. Savage. By the time you could get Carter here in response to your telegram I may be ready to take my own identity."

"Very well," returned Mallory. "But, whatever you do, take care nothing gets out about this affair. It would ruin this hotel if it did. And it is particularly important to us to keep its reputation unsoiled just now."

"I understand," remarked the detective, smiling.

"You do?" exploded Mallory. "What do you understand?"

"That you are arranging to sell out, and that it might interfere with the deal if it were known that guests had been abducted and robbed in the hotel before it has been open a month."

"I don't know how you've learned so much about our business," growled Paul Savage. "But——"

A loud knock at the door made Mallory go over to it, with a frown at the insistency of the summons.

"There's no peace for us at any time," he growled.

He settled his face into its customary expression of smirking amiability, prepared to give a soft response to whatever might be said to him by the newcomer—no doubt

some guest of the house—and unlocked and opened the door.

A wide-awake-looking young man, with a cap on the back of his head, and his thumbs tucked into his shiny new belt, met James Mallory's machine-made smile with one that was undoubtedly sincere.

"Mr. Mallory?" inquired the young man, in a brisk tone.

"Yes, sir."

"Manager of the Hotel Amsterdam?"

"One of them."

"Mr. Savage in?"

"He is in the office. Yes, sir," returned Mallory, whose business smile had become a frown. "What can we do for you?"

"I should like to have a little conversation, if you can spare me a few minutes."

As Mallory had involuntarily stepped back a little, the young man gently pushed his way through the doorway.

Nick Carter noted, with amusement, that the caller's eyes were swiftly sweeping the whole room and its three occupants.

"What do you want to see us about, Mr.—Mr.——" faltered Savage, who had noted the smooth insistence with which the young man had insinuated himself into the room.

"My name is Hugo Dressler," supplied the young man promptly. "I represent the New York *Enquirer*, and——"

"A reporter?" screamed Mallory.

"Yes. You see, gentlemen," went on Dressler hurriedly, so that Mallory should not get an opportunity to go on, "a report has reached us of abductions in the Hotel Amsterdam, together with the stealing of jewelry to a large amount, and the story looked big enough for the paper to sent a special man to look into it."

"There is nothing to look into!" bawled Mallory. "No truth in it! Not a scintilla!"

"Well, we have published something already, on the strength of our regular correspondent down here, and he says he can verify it if we like."

"He can't verify anything. One of our guests went over to visit a yacht lying out there in the bay, owned by a highly respectable citizen, a multimillionaire, named Spanner——"

"Spanner?" put in Dressler. "Know his first name?"

"What do you want to know that for?" spluttered Mallory. "I don't know his first name!"

"Never mind," returned Hugo Dressler coolly. "I can easily find that out later."

"It's Jared," interposed Paul Savage. "There's no use in trying to hide the name of so prominent a man as Jared Spanner, Mallory."

"Not a bit," agreed Dressler. "Now, gentlemen, I'll show you what we have already printed, and you can make any statement you like. The *Enquirer* will be only too glad to publish it. Wait a moment. I may as well make a note of that name."

He jotted down "Jared Spanner" on a pad of white paper, folded in three, which he took from his inside pocket.

As he returned this, he brought forth a folded newspaper from another pocket. It was the *Enquirer* of the day before.

Dressler opened it till he got the front page outermost, and pointed to a small article under a double head in the first column: "Guest Stolen from a Hotel. Wealthy Woman Vanishes in the Night. Believed to Have Been Abducted.

"It is reported that a well-known society woman, of great wealth, was taken from her rooms in the fashionable new Hotel Amsterdam, on the Delaware coast, a night or two ago, and held for ransom. All her jewels went with her. They are valued at nearly half a million dollars. The lady's maid says her mistress retired at her usual hour, and had no intention of going out in the night. The next morning the rooms of the lady were found still fastened inside, but she had disappeared. It is a mystery that the managers of the hotel, Mallory and Savage, are doing their best to clear up, and no doubt they will do so in a short time. Meanwhile, the affair has created a sensation which increases as time goes on. The *Enquirer* refrains from printing the lady's name, for obvious reasons. It may be stated, however, that it is that of one of the most prominent families in the social life of New York and Newport, and that it is equally well known in the aristocratic society of the capitals of Europe."

"Villainous!" ejaculated Mallory, as he finished reading, with Savage looking over his shoulder. "There is not a word of truth in the whole story. We shall enter suit against the *Enquirer* at once for printing it."

"How much damages?" asked Dressler, in a business-like tone.

"Five hundred thousand——"

Savage jerked his partner by the elbow and whispered a moment or two in his ear.

Hugo Dressler was making a note on his pad of paper, under the name of Jared Spanner, of the amount of damages to be claimed.

"That is all there is about it, eh?" asked Dressler. "You deny the whole yarn, and will sue the *Enquirer* for five hundred thousand dollars for making the statement? Well, I just want to send this off to New York at once, as soon as I can get a telephone. You have long-distance connections right here in the hotel, I suppose?"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Savage.

"My people will want to flash this outside the office right away: 'The *Enquirer* to be sued for half a million dollars for publishing story about new summer Hotel Amsterdam.' That's worth my coming down here for, without anything else. Good day, gentlemen! I have already registered at the desk and taken a room."

"You have?" stormed Mallory. "Well, we don't want you in the house! You can't stay here!"

"I can't? Why not? I have the money to pay for accommodations, and I am not drunk, disorderly, a criminal, or unclean. I don't think that, under the law, you can refuse me. If you do, you will find another lawsuit on your hands—but you'll be the defendants, and I shall be plaintiff, backed up by my paper. And, believe me, the *Enquirer* has plenty of money, and it always backs up its men, when they're in the right."

"Shut up, Mallory!" whispered Savage. "Don't make a bad matter worse. Let me deal with this newspaper man."

"Hello, Carter!" suddenly burst out Dressler. "By George! How are you? I've been looking at you, but it wasn't till I saw that little smile of yours that I was

certain of you. That costume is different from any you usually wear, and the cap you have on is pulled so far over your eyes that it almost hides them."

He held out his hand to Nick Carter, who took it with a hearty grip now that he found he was recognized.

"Don't call me 'Carter' around this hotel, Hugo," requested the detective. "I am Colonel Pearson here. I put the cap on and pulled it down, hoping you would not know me."

"You'd have to change those eyes of yours before you could fool me," replied Dressler, shaking his head. "They are a little sharper than any I ever saw anywhere else."

The reporter led Nick into a corner of the room.

"Are you on this case, Nick?"

"I may be."

"It's all true, isn't it?"

"I can't say anything about that just now."

"Why not?"

"Because I have not told these men I will take the case yet."

"Why don't you? I suppose they want you to, don't they?"

"Colonel Pearson," broke in Paul Savage. "Will you tell this gentleman from the *Enquirer* that there is nothing to be said about the alleged abduction, and that Mrs. van Dietrich, the lady referred to in that statement in his paper, is in her rooms at this moment?"

"Yes," replied Nick quietly. "That is true. She is in her rooms, to the best of my belief."

"In that case," purred Hugo Dressler, with a smile, "there can be no objection to my interviewing the lady for her version of the incident."

"I've told you there was no incident," bellowed Mallory.

"Keep quiet, will you?" interposed his partner. "You're always doing something to make trouble, Mallory. Leave this to me."

"But——"

"Leave it to me, I tell you. Colonel Pearson, will you please take Mr.—er—Dressler with you. We have said there is nothing in the matter. He seems to know you. Doubtless you can make him believe you, even though he appears to doubt my word."

"Oh, now! Not so bad as that," smilingly protested Dressler, with uplifted hand.

A moment later Nick Carter and the representative of the New York *Enquirer* were in the corridor outside the private office.

As the door closed, somebody coming along the corridor bumped violently into the reporter.

"What the——" began Dressler irritably. Then a smile spread over his face and he caught the other man by the two elbows, as he exclaimed: "Chick! by the great god of Timbuktu! Now I *know* there is something in all this, I saw the old bloodhound, Captain, out in the back yard of the hotel, and now I find you."

"Well, you suspicious old scout!" laughed Chick. "What about it?"

"Only that Nick Carter wouldn't have you both down here if there were not something doing," returned Dressler positively.

"Come to my room, both of you," said Nick, moving toward the elevator. "And remember, Dressler, that I am Colonel Pearson."

CHAPTER IV.

THE HELIOGRAPH.

It was the dinner hour that night at the Hotel Amsterdam, and Mrs. van Dietrich, gorgeously attired, but wearing only a few rings and a brooch, instead of the array of diamonds that usually decorated her ample person, was in the palm room of the hotel, dining with another widow of her own wealthy and dignified set, when Mrs. Parker, Mrs. van Dietrich's maid, went up in the elevator to the sixth floor.

Mrs. Parker wore a light shawl over her head, with a cloak covering her black gown, and without the white apron she usually wore when in attendance on her employer.

There were two more flights above the sixth floor of the hotel, but they were used only by attachés of the house. Guests had no business up there, except in the elevator on their way to the roof garden.

Mrs. Parker walked up the last two flights because she did not want to be seen going to the roof.

"I didn't suppose I should find anybody here," she muttered, as she stepped out of the covered doorway at the top of the stairs, taking her to the roof. "After dinner they'll all be on the roof, in force. By that time I shall be finished."

Like many modern hotels in America, the Hotel Amsterdam had a roof garden which it advertised as one of its notable advantages. Presumably it was called a garden because it was not one.

There were palms and other plants, mostly artificial, scattered about the spacious flat surface, and an iron balcony around it prevented careless guests taking a header of a hundred feet or so to the sea or the grounds surrounding the building.

A band stand at one end accommodated the orchestra which came from the palm room after dinner, and many powerful arc lights made the place brilliant after dark.

One swift glance about the garden was enough for Mrs. Parker. She did not see anybody, and she went to the side of the roof overlooking the sea, where she took from beneath her cloak a pair of powerful night glasses.

Having trained the glasses on the yacht, which, by its lights, she could see plainly enough in the position it had been in for several days, she stood there for a few minutes, trying to make out what was going on aboard of her.

She put the glasses down at last, to rest her eyes. The spectacles she usually wore, she had removed as she walked up the two flights of stairs at the top of the others, and had stowed them away in a case in a pocket.

"Spanner and Latell ought to be on the watch for me," she murmured. "Perhaps they are. I'll try them."

From the folds of her capacious cloak she brought a large flat bag, hung across her shoulder by a strap, around to the front.

She had unfastened the bag and was feeling inside of it, when a hand rested on her arm, and a low voice whispered:

"It's Monk."

A short, rather lean boy—or man—was standing close to her, as if to hide himself in her shadow.

He was not more than three feet in height, but seemed to be well proportioned.

Instead of looking like so many dwarfs—as if nature

had taken a delight in misshaping him, as well as cutting down his height—Monk Lidew was a perfect man in miniature.

"How did you come here?" asked Parker calmly, although she could not hide the fact that she was surprised.

"Boat," was the short reply.

"Where is it?"

Monk pointed significantly downward over the balcony.

"You did not come up in the elevator, did you?" she asked.

"No. That would have been stupid. There are people here who might know me. Carter would. Where is he?"

"Taking dinner in the palm room, with Chick and a reporter from a New York paper."

"A reporter, eh?"

"Yes. But he's not dangerous. It is only Carter we have to look out for. Who is on deck over there?"

"Mr. Spanner, Captain Latell, and Mr. Morgan, the first mate."

"Ah! Yes!" she murmured meditatively. "Of course! He is first mate now that poor Kennedy is dead. Well, if Morgan does as well in the position of first mate as he has in second, I shall be satisfied. Anything new, Monk?"

"They sent me over to get orders."

"Very well. Wait a few minutes. I want to talk to Mr. Spanner myself first. Has he got his heliograph instrument ready?"

"Yes. You ordered that, you know, when you decided not to use the wireless telephone any more."

"Very well. You stay over by the elevator shaft and that doorway and let me know if anybody comes while I am working."

"Yes, mademoiselle."

Lidew got his appellation of "Monk" from his remarkable agility. He was a member of the crew of the *Idaline*, which was riding so gracefully in the bay, and of which Mademoiselle Valeria, the beautiful young woman who had given Nick Carter so much trouble at various times, was the owner and real commander.

Jared Spanner was Valeria's uncle, and, for convenience, he figured as owner of the yacht. In reality, he was as much under her orders as the most insignificant member of the crew.

Monk could climb like a monkey. He could jump from rope to rope, too, and with a sureness of grasp that was extraordinary in a human being.

Whenever it was desired for somebody to get to a part of the yacht aloft where no one else cared to go, it was always Monk Lidew who got the job, and he had never failed yet.

In addition to all this, he worshiped the fair owner of the *Idaline* with an unquestioning, doglike fidelity, that enabled her to put perfect trust in him, no matter how great the emergency.

Parker saw that Monk was on watch. Then she took from the black bag a curious combination of mirrors, hinged together. This she mounted on a long skeleton tripod which had folded up into a very small space inside the bag.

No doubt, the reader has guessed ere this that Mrs. Parker, the demure, middle-aged maid in the employ of Mrs. van Dietrich, was really the beautiful Mademoiselle Valeria, owner of the yacht *Idaline*—the vessel that Nick Carter had declared to James Mallory was a pirate craft, which might with propriety have flown the skull and crossbones instead of the Stars and Stripes.

She may as well be called by her name after this.

The heliograph is an instrument for sending messages by the Morse code in a series of flashes with the aid of the sun. Valeria had no sun at that time of night, but she made use of an electric arc light which glowed near her, and which was in the right position for her mirrors.

After one or two false attempts, she caught the light as she wanted it, and slowly flashed over to the yacht, by long and short flashes, the name of "Jared."

In a minute or so she could make out a small light in the darkness where she knew the *Idaline* lay—after all the other lights on the vessel had been put out. This single light blinked several times, and by it she spelled out the words: "Jared here. Go ahead!"

She answered back: "Am coming over, to bring jewelry. Send boat to meet me. Monk here. He will bring me. Be ready to leave at once."

She signed this communication "Val." Then she waited for an acknowledgment, to be sure that what she had sent was understood. The acknowledgment said:

"Right. Boat will come till meets you. Everything ready. JARED."

She had just returned her apparatus to the black bag, hidden under her cloak, when Monk stole up to report that the elevator was coming, with a lot of men and women, all laughing and talking.

"All right, Monk!" she answered. "I'll go down. When will you have the boat for me?"

"In five minutes, just below the boat landing of the hotel," was the quick reply.

"Very well. I don't know how you are going to get there without being seen in the house."

"I do," replied Monk.

With a careless laugh he leaped over the iron balcony, and she saw his head disappear, as he began to climb down the face of the building, by clinging to window sills, sun blinds, projections of the ornamental architecture, and so forth.

"They did well to call him 'Monk,'" she murmured, with a slight smile, as she went down the staircase, avoiding the elevator.

Some cautious impulse caused her to lock and bolt the door to the roof as she went down. The only way to get away from the roof now was by the one elevator.

Just as Valeria closed and locked the door, Nick Carter, in the evening clothes he had worn in the dining room, in his assumed character of Colonel Pearson, stepped out of the elevator, with Mrs. van Dietrich.

"Why, where's Mrs. Parker? I'm quite sure she was here. The elevator man saw her when up the last time. She seemed to be doing something with what looked like a music stand over there by the railing, he said. She told me yesterday that she takes a great interest in astronomy. I suppose she was studying the stars."

Mrs. van Dietrich said this in a tone of vexation. Nick Carter might have said something similar, and also in a vexed tone, for his purpose in coming up now was to have a serious interview with the demure Mrs. Parker.

With a bow, Nick left Mrs. van Dietrich, to look over

the balcony on the roof at the waters of the bay, nearly a hundred feet below.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," he murmured. "So, my dear Mademoiselle Valeria, we meet again, blade to blade, and toe to toe! We'll see who will win the game this time."

CHAPTER V.

THE QUICKEST WAY.

Nick ran to the door leading to the stairs.

In his one look over the balcony he had seen a man—or boy, he could not tell which—going down the front of the house like a monkey. Then he had made out a boat rocking at the base of the building, fastened by a line to the stone wall just above the water line.

"I'm glad I caught that heliograph message," he muttered. "Valeria is a smart young woman. But Chick knew how to keep watch on her. I wish he had stayed up here to see everything she was doing. But I guess that would have meant his being seen. Anyhow, he told me what was going on."

He had been mechanically tugging at the door while reflecting thus, and looking about him. Now he gave it another hard pull, and realized that it was secured inside.

"All right, Valeria! You were suspicious, I know, in the office. Now it seems as if you have been taking measures to beat me. But you haven't done it yet, my girl."

Nick did not waste any more time at the door. He might have forced it if he had cared to spend ten minutes or so on the task. But he could not afford that.

"She'd be halfway to the yacht before I could get down if I did that," he said to himself.

He stepped hastily over to a corner of the roof garden, where three telephone booths were in a sort of room, with windows all around. At the switchboard sat a girl attendant.

Nick had told Chick to remain in the detective's room until called, and it did not take long to get him on the wire.

"Hello, Chick!"

"Hello, chief!"

"Follow Mrs. Dietrich's maid, Mrs. Parker—you know who she is, but you'll continue to look on her as Mrs. Parker—and see where she goes. If she gets into a boat, you get another. No, get another anyhow, and have it ready at the hotel boathouse. There is some one from the yacht likely to be about there, and perhaps Mrs. Parker herself. Don't let them see you."

"Where are you?" asked Chick.

"In the roof garden. There seems to be something wrong with the elevator. I'll come down as soon as I can."

"All right! By the way, there's nothing wrong with the elevator. Two or three women are chewing the rag at the elevator door on this floor, and holding the car while they do it."

"That's all. Have the boat ready," replied Nick, and rang off.

The detective hurried to the balcony again and looked over.

What he saw made him conceive a plan as daring as any that had come to him at any time in his career.

"If he can do it, so can I," he muttered.

Monk Lidew had not got to the bottom of the building. Indeed, he seemed to be stuck somehow at the third story.

"His coat has caught on a nail. I hope he'll stick there. And there's Valeria in another boat rowing up to the one fastened to the wall. Where the deuce is Chick?"

It was quite bright on the roof, with all the electric lights, and now that the orchestra had taken possession of the band stand, most of the guests had seated themselves in chairs around it, to enjoy the music.

Where Nick stood at the balcony it was quite empty save for his own presence. Moreover, the arc light which Valeria had used for her heliograph operations had gone out—as electric lights will sometimes, from various causes, and he was in deep gloom.

"A nail caught his coat, eh?" he murmured. "I'll guard against that."

Hastily emptying the pockets of his claw-hammer coat of a few letters and an automatic pistol, he stuffed them all into his waistcoat and trousers pockets.

Then he pulled off the coat and laid it down, folded, on the roof, close to the iron balcony.

It was a queer proceeding for a gentleman in evening dress. But no one was near to comment upon it, and Nick Carter knew he had a definite purpose in view.

"I have done things of this kind before," he murmured. "But I don't believe I ever shall do it simply for amusement."

A smile passed over his countenance as he threw one leg over the balcony. Then he went down, as Monk Lidew had done.

The detective was as agile as Monk himself, and absolutely fearless. Nature had blessed him with powerful muscles and supple joints, and he had always kept himself in the pink of condition by constant exercise.

Unless one has actually attempted the feat of climbing down the front of an eight-story building with nothing to hold to but such chance projections as the architect may have provided, he can hardly realize what a hair-raising task both Nick Carter and Monk Lidew had undertaken.

To begin with, both of them were endowed with steady heads. They did not get dizzy at great heights. They could not afford to now. Such a weakness would have been fatal before they had lowered themselves one story.

Nick first found himself on top of the ornamental arch surmounting a window on the top story.

Fortunately, there was a width of about four inches here, so that he was able to secure a good foothold before getting down to one knee.

He reached for a wooden sun blind below. It was wide open and fastened against the wall.

The blind was wabbly. But Nick knew that the man underneath had gone that way, and he estimated that if it would bear the weight of one person, it would support another.

He got to the window sill in safety. He was glad the window was a little way open at the bottom, because that gave him a good grip on the sill as he let himself down to the next window.

He had gone down to the third story without much difficulty, before he thought of the man he had seen fastened there by a nail.

An ejaculation arose from below, and Nick was in time

to see an undersized man drop into a boat in which sat a woman, the oars in her hands, ready to row away.

The man was Monk, of course. He contrived to drop into the middle of the boat, but only just escaped upsetting the light craft, more especially as there was a brisk breeze blowing, which kept it on the jump.

As the boat shot away, another one came sliding along the wall, and the voice of Chick hailed Nick Carter.

"Hello, chief!"

"Hello!" was the response. "Come close to the wall. I want to let myself into the boat."

Chick held still by gripping the stones of the foundation wall, and Nick descended swiftly until he was only about six feet above the rocking boat.

"You can't jump in from that height," whispered Chick. "You might go through the bottom."

"Come under me, so that I can put my feet on your shoulders," suggested the detective.

It was a ticklish proceeding. But Nick was equal to it. He contrived to climb down the wall a little more, until he could reach Chick's shoulders. From them he slid into the boat.

No sooner was he down than he took a seat in the middle of the boat and began to row toward the open bay. Chick manned another pair in the bows and helped.

The other craft—a flat-bottomed skiff—was considerably ahead.

Soon, however, Nick Carter could see that the girl was rowing one pair of oars, and her companion another. Both pulled with the precision and power of regular seamen.

"It's wonderful that so slight a girl can have so much strength," remarked Nick, unconsciously giving audible voice to his reflections.

"She's all strength, both in her mind and otherwise," was Chick's philosophical response. "What's more, she doesn't carry any excess weight."

There was no more talk. The even beat of the oars of the pursuing boat was the only sound heard.

Monk Lidew had taken the precaution to muffle his rowlocks.

It was when Monk and Valeria were about a hundred yards from the yacht that another and larger rowboat shot out from the shadow of the *Idaline* under her counter.

In this boat were five men—four at the oars and one steering.

"If there's to be a scrap," whispered Chick, "we'll have the odds against us."

"They always are when we have any dealings with Mademoiselle's men," returned Nick.

In a few moments the big boat had come alongside of the one in which Valeria and Monk Lidew were rowing.

The newcomers threw a line to Monk, which he fastened to the bows, while Mademoiselle Valeria never ceased working at her oars.

The result of the combined motive power was that the two boats got to the yacht and disappeared to the other side of her, while Nick and his assistant were several hundred yards away.

"Pull hard, Chick!" whispered his chief.

Both bent to their oars. They did not row directly to the yacht, however. No doubt men on deck would be watching for them, and it was Nick's determination to board the vessel at any cost.

Making a wide detour, they were able, in the darkness, to come to the yacht on the other side, and to reach the foot of the sea ladder before anybody was aware of their approach.

"Who's that?" shouted Morgan, the first mate, from the deck, as Chick passed the painter around the ladder rail and made fast.

"Colonel Pearson," replied Nick, without hesitation.

"All right, colonel. Come aboard. I'll send a man down to help you, if you like," replied Morgan, in a courteous tone.

"Thanks! It isn't necessary," said Nick.

"What does this mean?" whispered Chick.

"We'll soon find out," was his chief's reply. "Meanwhile, keep your eyes peeled for a sly move somewhere."

CHAPTER VI.

NICK FINDS THE JEWELRY.

Nick Carter ran up the ladder to the deck, closely followed by his assistant. He was met at the gangway by Morgan, Captain Latell, and Jared Spanner.

"Good evening, Colonel Pearson!" chirped Spanner. "This is an unexpected pleasure. Have you come to offer some compromise over our unfortunate misunderstanding?"

The undercurrent of malignity over which flowed Jared Spanner's smooth language was as plain to Nick Carter as if it had shrieked aloud.

"We won't talk about that just now, Mr. Spanner," returned Nick Carter coldly. "I have come on other business."

"All right! Do you come as Colonel Pearson or Nick Carter?" snarled Spanner.

Nick did not take the trouble to answer this. His experience with Jared Spanner in the past had been that the more he condescended to argue with that gentleman, the more time he wasted.

Without a word, Nick pushed his way past the three men in authority, and then thrust aside several seamen who tried to stop him.

Chick was close upon his heels.

"Look down in the cabin, Chick," ordered his chief. "Have your gun ready. Mademoiselle is probably in her own stateroom. It is the first one on the left of the corridor."

Before the startled crew of the *Idaline* could interfere, Nick Carter had gone down the brass-bound stairs three at a time, and dashed into the narrow corridor from the main saloon.

"This way, Chick!"

The detective was determined to face Valeria, if he had to break into her private cabin.

But it was not necessary to do that. The stateroom was wide open, but, though the dainty decorations of the room indicated that it was generally occupied by the fair owner of the yacht, she was not there.

Nick spent no time in regrets. He remembered that Mrs. van Dietrich had been found in a cabin at the end of the corridor, and he ran to it without a pause.

The door of this room, too, was half open. A glance told him it was untenanted.

"Back, Chick!" he called out, as he saw that his assistant was close behind him. "She's not down here! All the other staterooms are open."

"It looks as if they might have expected a visit from us, and had left things in a condition to prove that we have no cause for action," suggested Chick.

"Possibly. At all events, they're all empty."

"She must be aboard somewhere," was Chick's response. "Let's go to the deck again and see what we can get out of those pirates up there."

"That's the thing to do," agreed Nick. "But the very fact that they invited us to come aboard, and have shown no inclination toward hostilities, makes me think they have hidden mademoiselle where we are not likely to find her."

"The dubs!" was all the indignant Chick could say.

"Well, colonel," grinned Spanner, as the detective faced him at the top of the companion ladder. "We have not interfered with your rather unusual proceedings on a vessel that does not belong to you. Will you kindly tell us what you were looking for down below?"

"Mademoiselle Valeria is on this yacht," replied Nick. "She brought with her a quantity of jewelry. I happened to have had considerable experience in sending and reading heliographs, and I caught one sent to you from the roof of the hotel a short time ago."

Jared Spanner laughed derisively, but there was a lack of sincerity in his mirth. Obviously he was taken very much aback.

"I have not had any heli—heli—— What is it you call the message? I don't know what you mean."

"Perhaps you don't. But I'll tell you what the message said. It told you that the sender was coming to the yacht with the jewelry. She asked you to send a boat to meet her, and that Monk would bring her across the bay."

"Even supposing there was such a message," rejoined Spanner. "How do you know who sent it?"

"It was signed 'Val,'" said Nick curtly. "Will you let me look over the yacht? Or shall I have to bring men to help me?"

"Look where you like," returned Spanner, with a shrug. "Perhaps Captain Latell will help you?"

"If you like, Mr. Spanner," said the captain.

Nick Carter was not to be deceived by this ready acquiescence.

He knew that, for some reason—probably because the rascals felt sure that he would not be able to find Mademoiselle Valeria on the yacht—they were pretending to give him all the assistance in his search they could—in the wrong directions.

He resolved to look in every part of the vessel, feeling sure that, if she were on board, as he was convinced she must be, he would come across her hiding place sooner or later.

If he let her escape now, that would be the end of Mrs. van Dietrich's diamonds, so far as he was concerned.

Well he knew the speed that could be attained by this splendidly built steam yacht, and he doubted not that Valeria's next move would be to get away as quickly as possible, and to unknown waters.

The search lasted for more than half an hour. It comprehended the engine room, the hold, and other unlikely places, beside the chart room and the well-appointed cabins below.

"Look among the sailors, Chick," whispered the detective. "I never knew her to put on masculine attire. But she might do it in a pinch. We must be prepared for anything."

But whatever Valeria may have done to conceal herself from Nick Carter and Chick, certain it is that she had not adopted men's clothes. Every member of the crew was inspected, as well as even the men in the engine room.

There was no disguised Valeria among them.

"Couldn't you find the jewelry, chief?" whispered Chick.

"Not if it is hidden on the yacht. Diamonds and things of that kind could be concealed anywhere. It would be hopeless to look for them."

Nick Carter had spoken rather louder than his assistant, and he started as he heard Jared Spanner, at his elbow, offer to show them Mademoiselle Valeria's jewelry, if they desired.

"It is in the safe in her room, and I have the combination," he went on smoothly. "You know, of course, that she is my niece, and that I am, in fact, her guardian until she is twenty-five years of age."

Spanner delivered himself of this lie as smoothly as he said everything, with a smile that made Chick long to send in a jolt to his face that would knock his mouth crooked.

Nick understood that Spanner depended on his not being familiar with Mrs. van Dietrich's valuables, so that he would not be able to swear that the jewelry in Valeria's safe was not her own.

"Let me see it," requested Nick.

Down to the stateroom went Nick and his assistant, accompanied by Jared Spanner, Captain Latell, and the first mate, Morgan.

"There it is, Colonel Pearson," said Spanner, with a mocking grin, as he opened the safe.

He brought out two large drawers, both of which were full of rings, brooches, bracelets, chains, diamond and pearl pendants, and other costly ornaments. Diamonds predominated, although there were other precious stones in abundance.

At a hasty appraisement, Nick Carter decided that the whole collection was worth quite the hundred thousand dollars at which Mrs. van Dietrich estimated her loss.

"I see these jewels, Mr. Spanner, and I should say they are what we are looking for," remarked Nick Carter.

"They belong to Mademoiselle Valeria, and have been hers for several years," rejoined Spanner, as he pushed the drawers farther from the detective on the table where he had placed them. "I have been straightforward with you in exhibiting them because I know that you cannot prove they belong to anybody else."

It was evident that Jared Spanner felt so secure, with Captain Latell and Morgan both in the stateroom, and all the crew on deck, within call, that he was not afraid of showing this enormous amount of jewelry to Nick Carter freely.

But he was not prepared for what followed.

Nick had the faculty of being able to see all around him without seeming to move his eyes, and he had noted that there was a clear way to the door, for all three of the yacht's men were on the other side.

Chick, after one long look at the jewelry in the drawers, had stepped outside the stateroom, keeping his eyes on his chief.

A code of signals had long since been arranged between the great detective and his lieutenant, and it was possible for them to talk to each other in a wordless way by such trifles as a shrug of the shoulders, a pushing backward or forward of a hat, a shuffle of the feet, and other everyday gestures.

It was by this code that Nick told Chick there was to be a rush, and that he must cover his chief's retreat.

It was not difficult to convey this in code, because it had been used by them often before. Indeed, it was one of the commonest communications they ever made to each other.

Bracing himself for a supreme effort, Carter suddenly swooped down on the two drawers, placed one on top of the other in his arm, and butted his way to the door.

He had judged his distance accurately.

First he sent his head full into the stomach of Jared Spanner. That gentleman, being of a decided plumpness, doubled up with a grunt and sat down heavily on the floor.

Nick could not use his hands as weapons, because he was holding the two precious drawers.

But he was expert in all kinds of fighting, and he knew that the elbow can be made useful in a rough and tumble if judiciously employed.

Captain Latell and Morgan were both active and rather heavy men, but, fortunately for the detective, they could not, in the cramped quarters of the stateroom, both come at him at once.

Morgan made the first charge. Immediately he fell backward with a jolt from Nick's left elbow that sent him toppling over on top of Spanner.

"Woof!" gasped Spanner. "Get off my chest!"

"Shut up!" returned Morgan angrily.

Half dazed by the uppercut to the chin, he forgot for the moment the respect he was accustomed to show to the uncle of the owner of the yacht.

Nick subconsciously became aware of this little by-play, and even in that desperate instant he could not help smiling.

Then he found himself faced by Captain Latell, and he realized that the skipper was fighting shy of his elbows.

There was only one thing for Nick to do, and that was to turn halfway around and send his mighty shoulder full into the chest of the captain.

The detective executed the maneuver skillfully.

But Latell was in good physical condition. His flesh was firm, his joints supple, and his wind excellent.

He yielded slightly to the tremendous shove dealt by Nick, but recovered instantly and tried to swing at the detective's face.

But ducking was one of the tricks of the boxer in which the detective was a past master, and the well-intentioned blow of the skipper passed over his head, his knuckles striking the doorpost with a resounding thwack.

This was Chick's cue, and he took it up smartly.

Out went one of his legs, and, as his chief slipped through the doorway and dashed along the corridor, Chick threw Captain Latell flat upon his back with one of the prettiest "back heels" ever seen on that yacht, or anywhere else.

"Come, Chick!" shouted Nick Carter, as he went up the companionway.

It was not with a rush that Nick came out to the deck. He walked forth deliberately.

There had been no noise to speak of below, and the men on deck were scattered about, attending to their various duties in an unconcerned way. They had no knowledge of the row in the cabin below.

"Slip over to the gangway and down the ladder before they get suspicious, Chick," was Nick Carter's admonition.

"All right!"

The two detectives actually brushed against two of the seamen as they got to the opening in the side of the ship to go down the ladder outside.

"Cast off and row toward the open sea, Chick," directed Nick, in a low tone. "We must lose ourselves in the darkness where they don't expect us to go."

"I get you," chuckled Chick.

But Nick Carter had not gone down more than two steps, while Chick still stood on the deck of the yacht, prepared to follow, when a mighty shudder ran through the vessel, simultaneously with the sharp strokes of a bell.

Nick Carter knew what this meant. The anchors had been weighed in silence, by a method specially designed by Valeria herself, for use in emergencies, and the yacht was loose from all holds.

Now a secret order had gone to the engine room, while the bell gave signals to the crew to stand by. The *Idaline* was already beginning to move.

CHAPTER VII.

A BATTLE IN THE FOG.

It was not clear to Nick Carter why the yacht should be started just as he had got away with the two drawers containing jewels worth a big fortune.

But the explanation came when Morgan ran roaring across the deck as he saw that Nick was on the ladder, with Chick just ready to follow.

"Hold those men!" he commanded. "Don't let them get off the ship. And grab those boxes the first one has."

Four sailors piled down the sea ladder after the two detectives.

Two of them grabbed Chick, while two others caught Nick Carter's arms.

Nick was encumbered with the two drawers, which, with their contents, and from the fact that both were of steel, were very heavy. He could not offer effective resistance to the men who had seized him while thus burdened. Therefore, as it seemed to him, the proper thing to do was to get clear of the drawers.

He was determined not to lose them now that he actually had the jewels in his hands.

But there was only one place to put them for safety. That was the boat in which he and Chick had rowed up to the *Idaline*.

"Chick!" he cried, above the noise of battle.

"I hear you!" replied Chick.

"Follow me! Throw the men into the sea if you must, but come with me!"

All this was in the space of a second or two, and Chick, bracing himself for whatever was to come, wrestled steadily with the two sailors, although he did not exert himself more than was required to hold them at bay.

The yacht had not gained any speed to speak of. But even the turning and heaving that were the necessary accompaniments of the engines beginning to work, caused the water to boil up angrily along her hull, while the tossing waves, even without this added disturbance, kept the small boat rocking dangerously at the foot of the ladder.

Nick tore one arm loose from the sailor who held him. Then, judging his distance as well as he was able on the swinging ladder and in the darkness, he hurled both drawers into the boat.

There was a crash and a spattering sound. Most of the jewels were thrown from the drawers and scattered loosely over the bottom of the boat. But the detective felt assured that none had gone overboard.

"Now, Chick!"

With a mighty effort, Nick Carter threw off both of the men holding him, and, in spite of the frantic orders yelled by Morgan and by Captain Latell, who had now joined his first mate on deck, Chick also managed to get away from his two would-be captors.

"Cut loose, Chick!" shouted Nick.

He handed his open jackknife to his assistant and sat down in the middle of the boat, holding a pair of oars ready for use.

"Stop!" bellowed Jared Spanner. "If you don't, I'll sink you!"

"Can't you cut through that rope, Chick?" asked Carter, ignoring the shouts of Spanner.

"Yes. In a minute," replied Chick. "It's hard to reach it while the boat is jumping so."

"I'm going to fire!" warned Morgan.

"No, Morgan! Don't do that!" ordered Latell peremptorily. "This is better."

It was fortunate that Chick managed to cut through the rope at this particular instant.

The taut line parted with a "whang-g-g," and the boat shot away from the side of the yacht, just as a heavy marlinespike, aimed with deadly precision at Chick's head, shot down into the sea in front of them.

Had the marlinespike struck Chick on the head, it would have killed him in a horrible way, and instantly.

"Get the other oars, Chick!"

"All right, chief!" was the cheerful response.

As the four oars struck the water together, the outline of the yacht became dim and finally disappeared.

"That's funny!" remarked Chick. "What's become of the yacht all at once?"

"A fog," replied Nick Carter briefly.

"That's what! You're right. It's rolling in from the open sea. Where are we, do you suppose? Which way are we going?"

But Nick Carter could not answer this last question now, although he could have done it easily a few minutes before.

Without a compass and unable to see the stars, he could only feel his way. So he told Chick to row hard for a while, keeping the boat as straight as possible.

"Rest a minute or two," he ordered suddenly.

Chick obediently stopped rowing, waiting for the next command.

The fog was so thick that neither could see the other except as a dark, shapeless mass a few feet distant.

Suddenly a small red light showed through the gloom. It was Nick Carter's pocket flash lamp.

The fog made the light not only smaller, but also caused it to show with a dull glow, that did not illuminate much.

"Chick, unship your oars and kneel in the bottom of the boat with this flash. Find all the jewelry that was shaken out of the drawers. I'll help."

In about ten minutes, after much groping, with the aid of Nick's flash, they decided that they had found everything that had fallen into the bottom of the boat from the two steel drawers.

"Now, what are we to do?" asked Chick.

"Fill your pockets with these things, and I will do the same. Then, whatever happens, we shall have the jewelry about us," was the reply.

"If we happen to have to swim, it will be like doing it with a brick in your clothes," remarked Chick.

"Not so bad as that," laughed the detective. "They won't weigh much if they are divided. Anyhow, I am not expecting to have to swim."

Chick put some of the jewelry in his coat pockets, as well as in his trousers and waistcoat.

Nick had no coat on, it will be remembered, so he stowed all his share in his trousers, with the exception of a few pieces that would fit in his waistcoat pockets.

"That will do," he said, as the job was finished. "Now I'll begin to row again. It's pretty cold in this fog, in my shirt sleeves, although I don't feel it so long as I am exercising."

If there had been a few stars visible, Nick could have found his way to shore with little difficulty. As it was, he did not know which way he was going.

He did not like this waste of time, independently of the discomfort of rowing about in the dark late at night. He wanted to get ashore and find out whether Valeria really had got away from the yacht. His own conviction was that she was still there, ingeniously secreted in some place that he and Chick had overlooked.

"The fog is getting thicker, it seems to me," grumbled Chick.

"It isn't lifting, that is a sure thing," responded Nick. "But we'll find ourselves after a time."

"Meanwhile, where are we going?"

"We are not going anywhere in particular, Chick. We have been rowing in a circle for the last quarter of an hour. That is the best thing we can do. We don't want to pull out to the open sea if we can help it."

There was silence for ten minutes. Then Nick whispered to Chick to stop rowing.

"What's the trouble?" growled Chick.

"Listen!"

"What? I don't hear anything except the lapping of the waves. There isn't even any wind."

"I wish there were. It would drive away this fog," rejoined Nick. "But I hear something else besides the sound of the water,"

They sat in silence for a few moments. Then Chick broke out, in sudden excitement:

"I hear it. Sounds like somebody panting. It might be our old dog, Captain, if we were on land. What is it?"

The sound came nearer—although, as they were in this thick fog, they could not tell on which side of them it was.

One of the dangerous characteristics of a fog at sea

is that men lose in it their sense of direction. That is which accounts for so many collisions.

"It is the beating of engines, Chick," declared Nick, in tense tones. "We must try to determine where it is. We don't want to get too near."

"I'd like to know how we are going to help ourselves," was Chick's rejoinder. "I suppose it is the yacht."

"Probably. Although, if we are outside the bay—as we may be, for anything we know—it might be a coaster. Anyhow, we'll have to be mighty careful. Keep a sharp lookout on all sides. Why aren't they sounding their siren? That would help some."

It was just as Nick made this remark that he saw a great black shape looming up in front of them, not more than a few yards away.

"Pull, Chick!" he shouted. "Pull, for your life!"

Chick had fallen into a sort of reverie, and he did not grasp the order with his usual alacrity.

Mechanically he pulled on one oar, then on the other, with the result that the boat, instead of shooting forward, swung around, notwithstanding that Nick Carter had thrown all his gigantic strength upon his oars and was rowing like a madman.

On came the great shape, which they could now see was the *Idaline*, and she seemed to be right above them.

"Pull, Chick! Pull!"

"I am!"

"Port! Port!" shrieked Nick Carter. "Pull on your left-hand oar. Never mind about the other!"

Chick strove to obey, and, with Nick also laboring to make the boat swing over to port, it seemed as if they might escape the catastrophe, after all.

Then, at the critical moment, when it looked as if they might slide along the smooth side of the destroying monster over their heads, to safety, there came a sudden swerve.

Crash! The sharp cutwater of the yacht struck their boat fairly in the center.

Amid a smother of foam and a deafening humming, as they both went down, Nick Carter and his assistant found themselves clinging each to a separate fragment of their little craft!

The yacht kept swiftly on its course!

As if in mockery, the steam siren, which had never emitted a sound up to this moment, broke into a long, mournful wail that echoed and reëchoed dismally across the waste of tossing waves!

CHAPTER VIII.

ON ANOTHER TRAIL.

It was fortunate for the two shipwrecked men that they had each managed to cling to half of the boat. The wreckage assisted them considerably in keeping afloat, so that they were not obliged to exert themselves so much in swimming.

For several minutes neither knew what had become of the other. Then, through the fog, Nick called out anxiously:

"Chick! Where are you?"

"In the sea," was the short reply. "Are you all right?"

"Yes. Are you swimming?"

"I am swimming some, but I've got a bit of the boat to help me. Come over this way. There's room for you to hold on. I can keep up on this all night."

"I have a piece of the boat, too," replied Nick. "What about the jewelry in your pockets?"

"The diamonds and things? They're all safe."

"Good! Don't lose them. We'll get ashore after a while."

The calm confidence with which Nick said this brought a chuckle from Chick. It was what he always expected from his chief in great emergencies, and he was never disappointed.

Nearer and nearer sounded the voice of Nick Carter, as he again called out to Chick and instructed him to answer.

"We are not far apart," said Nick. "When we get together, we can do better than like this. Swim in the direction of my voice, if you can, and I will do the same."

"I'm coming," replied Chick, so that his voice should give Nick the guidance Nick had suggested.

For the next ten minutes they exchanged short sentences at intervals. Then, through the fog, Nick could see his assistant hanging over the portion of the boat that had been left to him and paddling with his hands to send himself along.

They allowed the two jagged ends of their improvised rafts to slam together, and Nick saw, with satisfaction, that they had become wedged in such a way that they would form one big support, instead of two smaller ones.

"The fog is going," remarked Nick.

"That's so. Let her go! Maybe we shall be able to see where we are," responded his assistant.

As is so often the case, the fog lifted like a huge blanket that had been taken by the four corners in giant fingers. It was all away in a minute or two. As it rose into the strong wind that blew a little above the surface of the water, it went out to sea bodily.

Nick Carter's keen eyes swept the top of the water as he was raised on a wave, and again as he went up on another.

The first time he could just make out the strong electric lights on the roof of the Hotel Amsterdam, and he knew that they must be at least six miles from shore. Then, as he came up again and again, he looked all over the black sea, searching for the yacht.

"I see her, Chick!" he exclaimed.

"What?"

"The *Idaline*. She is headed straight for the open sea, and going fast. I see only one light, but the way it is moving tells that it is on a vessel, and the fact that it is obscured now and then indicates that the smoke is coming up thick from her funnel. She is making great time."

Nick announced this in the positive tone of one who is sure of what he is saying.

"How do you account for her getting away in such a hurry?"

"There are several ways to account for it, Chick. The most likely one is that Mademoiselle Valeria is aboard, and that she is making a swift get-away because she realizes that is the safest thing for her to do."

"She lost the jewelry she had pinched, though," chuckled

Chick. "Looks to me as if she hadn't made anything by her campaign in the hotel."

"It isn't often she fails," was Nick Carter's reply. "Even now I can't believe we are getting the best of her. She never ran away under fire before, that I remember, nor until she had tried every way to gain her ends, whatever they might happen to be."

Then what do you suppose she will do?"

"Most likely the steaming away of the yacht is only a blind. She will come back now that she thinks we are drowned, and try some other scheme to make up for her failure in this one."

"Perhaps she will be right in thinking we are drowned," declared Chick. "There does not seem a great chance of our getting to shore unless somebody comes our way and shows us the road."

"Keep quiet!" was Nick Carter's response to this. "Listen!"

The creaking of oars in padded rowlocks sounded close to them, and the voice of Hugo Dressler came clearly across the water:

"Hold on, boys! I thought I heard somebody speaking. Stop rowing a minute, will you?"

"Dressler!" shouted Chick.

"Sure it's Dressler. Where are you?"

A powerful pocket flashlight sent its beams across the tossing waves, and as Nick and his assistant were rolled to the crest of a big one, the light picked them up as clearly as if it had been noonday.

"Holy Neptune!" cried Dressler. "Pull hard, men!"

The two oarsmen—one to each oar—bent to their work and ran alongside of the two detectives—clinging to their splintered mass of wreckage—in so short a time that it did credit to their muscle as well as their skill.

"Give me your hand!" cried the reporter, as he found himself close to Nick Carter.

The detective hardly needed any help. When once he had got hold of the gunwale, he pulled himself aboard without apparent difficulty. A large wave helped him.

"Don't go away!" shouted Chick. "Here's another passenger for you! Wait till I come up!"

He had sunk into the trough between two immense billows. The next moment he was rolled to the top of a wave, and, with the aid of his chief and Dressler, was dragged in before he could drift away again.

"Here's an overcoat," said Dressler, taking off a heavy coat that he wore. "You haven't a coat at all, Carr—I mean, Colonel Pearson. Slip this on."

"Here's my coat for the other one," offered one of the oarsmen. "I am not wearing it."

The big overcoat belonging to Hugo Dressler soon graced the form of Nick Carter, while Chick put on the thick sack coat which had been lying at the feet of its owner as he rowed.

"This is better than getting all the night air," observed Nick. "Where are we, Dressler?"

"Five miles out on the bay. I saw you and Chick getting away in a boat, and I guessed you were following the other one. I'm a newspaper man. It was my cue to come along and find out what was doing."

"I'm glad you did," laughed Nick.

"So am I, for more reasons than one," returned Dressler. "Anyhow, I got a boat and these two husky boys belonging to the boathouse to row me, and here I am. I saw the yacht get away, and I was thinking of coming back to shore, because there seemed nothing else to do, when I thought I heard somebody talking."

"I suppose it was the chief or I," remarked Chick.

"Of course it was. I called out. But it seemed as if we must have drifted some distance apart, for my voice evidently hadn't carried to you."

"It hadn't," threw in Nick Carter briefly.

"I felt sure of that, when I didn't get an answer. But we stuck around, until at last I heard Chick call me by name. What have you found out about the diamonds belonging to Mrs. van Dietrich?"

"I'll tell you all about it when we get ashore," returned Nick.

"Were you on board the yacht?"

"Yes."

"What did you find out there?"

Hugo Dressler was firing in his questions as rapidly as possible, in the hope that something would come out in response before Nick realized that he was saying anything.

This sort of inquiry is technically known as "giving him the hurry."

Needless to say, it didn't work in the case of Nick Carter. At the end of five minutes Hugo Dressler had not learned anything, but he had the detective's promise to let him work on the case when they should get back to the hotel.

It took more than an hour's hard rowing to make the trip. But the two oarsmen were used to the bay, and now that the fog had lifted, they were able to steer straight to the hotel.

The lights of the roof garden were out. Only a light here and there in the windows of the big building told them which way to go.

It was two o'clock in the morning by the time Nick Carter, Dressler, and Chick went through the dimly lighted hotel office, got their room keys from the sleepy clerk behind the desk, and went up to their respective chambers.

Nick and his assistant both took a bath and dressed in dry clothing. Then they sat down together in Nick Carter's room—which adjoined that of his assistant—and emptied their wet pockets of the jewelry they had got from the safe in Valeria's cabin.

They had spread it out on the table, and Nick was carefully appraising and classifying it—putting the rings in one pile, the bracelets in another, the brooches in another, and so on—when there came a low, but imperative knock at the door.

Nick hastily threw a towel over the jewelry on the table and laid a coat carelessly over the towel, as he signaled to Chick to see who was at the door.

It had not opened more than six inches, when it was pushed wide from the outside, and Hugo Dressler, in a frenzy of excitement, stumbled in.

Hastily, but silently, he closed the door.

"Come on, Nick!" he whispered. "We've got the party who is after Mrs. van D.'s diamonds."

Nick Carter thought of the jewels lying on the table before him, under the coat and towel, and looked involuntarily around him for the thief.

"Where do you mean, Dressler?" he asked.

"Downstairs, in the office," was the enigmatical reply.

CHAPTER IX.

THROUGH A PEEPHOLE.

The private office of the managers was nearly at the end of a corridor on the main floor of the hotel, and in such a situation that it could not be seen from the desk in the lobby.

It had been the idea of Mallory and Savage to have a retreat where they could overlook things without being seen themselves. So, when they were in their own place, they could open a little hatch in the wall, about two inches square, look right along the corridor to the main entrance, and have a corner view of the café and palm room.

There was never any light near their office door, and it was sunk into the wall nearly two feet, like the door of a penitentiary cell. This made it unobtrusive, which was one of the important ends desired.

Nick Carter, Hugo Dressler, and Chick stepped softly down the corridor from the staircase—they had not used the elevator—and stood in the recess, while Nick gently tried the door.

It was locked, of course.

"The little peephole can be worked," whispered Dressler. "That's how I saw what was going on. But you have to go out in the hall to see it."

"I know that," returned Nick. "I would rather have gone in at once if we could. But I want to make sure I have some excuse for doing so. I'll take a look through the hole. You two stay here to guard the door."

"All right!" whispered Chick. "We'll grab anybody who comes out."

"That depends on who the person is," answered Nick. "Use discretion."

He went to the place in the wall where his quick eye had told him long before the peephole was situated, and gently tried to swing the flap aside.

It worked on a pivot, and was merely a flat disk of steel, painted inside to resemble the wall paper. In the corridor it could not be discerned at all, save by those who knew it was there.

One touch of the disk was enough to assure Nick that, even if it had been loose when Hugo Dressler gazed into the room, it was secure now.

"I wonder whether the party that Dressler referred to became suspicious. Anyhow, we'll have to get this open again."

A thin-bladed implement in his jackknife solved the difficulty. Nick moved the disk aside and peeped through. What he saw made him hurry around to the door, and, as he selected another small tool included in the equipment of his jackknife, he whispered to Chick and the reporter:

"Act quickly when we get inside. Don't let the person we find in there get away. But don't use violence if you can help it. Understand?"

There was no audible answer. None was required, because the detective knew his injuctions would be obeyed. He was too busy to wait for a response in words.

In another half minute Nick had shot back the lock with scarcely any noise. What little sound he may have made was drowned by the scraping of steel against steel in the safe which the managers reserved for their own use.

There was not much light in the office, but one electric burner was glowing close by the safe, on a chair. It was a portable desk lamp, with a wire leading to one of the overhead electric fixtures.

Nick noiselessly opened the door. Then stopped short, with a gasp of astonishment. At the same time he held up his hand for his two companions to stand back.

Kneeling at the safe, and working industriously with a brace and bit, was a woman in the black dress and white apron of a maid.

Her back was toward them, of course, but the slim figure and general appearance of the woman was enough for all three of the newcomers.

"How did she get back?" whispered Chick in the ear of his chief.

"Hush!" breathed Nick Carter.

It was strange to the detective that this woman had got away from the yacht without his seeing her, and that she should have changed her clothing to that of a maid at that time in the morning.

Second thoughts made it all clear to him, however.

He recalled that the sea ladder on the yacht had been on the side farthest from shore, and, therefore, hidden from him and Chick as they rowed toward her.

It would have been easy for a boat to leave the yacht in the fog before they arrived, and to get to shore without being seen.

On the other hand, Nick had been unable to find Valeria anywhere on the vessel, notwithstanding that he had searched it so thoroughly.

Still another indication that she had not been on board was the fact that the jewelry had been left in her cabin. He could only suppose that she left it there when she knew Nick was after her.

Then she had hurried away to make a quick raid on the private safe of Mallory and Savage.

No doubt she had considered the jewelry in her cabin quite secure. She had not bargained for Nick taking such determined measures to get to the bottom of her purpose in coming to the yacht.

Certainly, she never had expected him to thrash the three men in charge of the vessel, as, with the help of Chick, he had done so easily.

Thought runs with more than lightning swiftness very often, and Nick Carter had passed all this through his mind in the second or two during which he was moving from the door toward the safe and the kneeling maid.

It was an inadvertent slip by Hugo Dressler that prevented the detective getting his hand on the woman before she was aware of the presence of anybody in the room.

The reporter stumbled over the rug where it had been ruffled up slightly, and fell against a chair.

The first sound he made in his frantic efforts to save himself from falling gave warning to the fair burglar.

Out went the light, and the room was in pitch darkness.

Nick could have taken his pocket flash from where it was hid in his coat, close to his hand, but he did not think it necessary.

He was between her and the door, and he did not believe she could get past him, even in the darkness.

Then he heard the creaking of another door, and he remembered that there was an exit from the room by the side of the safe, which led, in a roundabout way, to the lobby, and so to the open air.

"Look out, Chick!" he shouted. "The other door!"

"Which other door?" bellowed the reporter.

Dressler and Chick darted forward together, with the result that they came into violent collision. The chair over which the reporter had stumbled was on the floor, and over this chair went both the young men.

Meanwhile, Nick had leaped to the door, grasping the shoulder of the fleeing woman just as she was going through.

There was a fierce, though silent resistance, on the part of the woman, which did not surprise the detective. He knew how strong Valeria was, and how she kept herself in splendid physical condition by a scientific system of daily exercise.

"It's no use, mademoiselle," whispered Nick, as he shifted his grip from her shoulder to her wrist. "You may as well surrender. It will be better for you than to try to get away."

She did not answer. Instead, she swung her other arm, that the detective could not see in the blackness, and brought down on his knuckles the heavy steel brace she had been using to bore holes around the lock of the safe.

Involuntarily Nick dropped the wrist of his prisoner, and in an effort to seize the hand which held the brace, accidentally struck her in the face.

There was a smothered ejaculation of pain. Then the door slammed, fastening with a spring lock.

By the time Nick had found the lock and opened the door, with the aid of his flash lamp, the woman had disappeared.

"It's no use, Chick! She's gone. The thing to do is to make sure she does not get out of the hotel. I'll take care of the front entrance. You two look after the others at the back. Better keep watch outside for a while."

But no one attempted to get out of the house. Nick and his two assistants kept vigil for nearly an hour. Then, as nothing happened, they all went to bed.

"I've got mademoiselle this time," thought Nick Carter, as he turned over to go to sleep.

CHAPTER X.

THE WRONG WOMAN.

"Well, Mr. Carter, you say that the woman who tried to break into this safe last night was the new maid in the employ of Mrs. van Dietrich?"

"Yes."

"Why do you think so?"

"I saw her at this safe."

"Had a good look at her, did you? You'd be able to swear to it? You saw her face quite plainly?"

It was Paul Savage asking the questions, while Mallory, in a state of greasy agitation, listened anxiously.

"I did not see her face plainly, because she switched out the light as soon as she knew I was present. But the woman who did that must have a bruise on her face this morning."

"We can settle that very easily, I think," observed Savage. "Mrs. van Dietrich's new maid is in the adjoining room."

Nick Carter started.

"What for?" he asked.

"She has heard that she is suspected of being in this office last night alone, presumably with criminal intent, although she does not know that she is charged with tampering with the safe. She has demanded that she be confronted with her accuser."

Nick Carter uttered an ejaculation. Would Valeria actually have the assurance to come and face him now? Truly she had nerve.

"Will you bring the maid in?" he asked quietly.

"Yes. Mallory, open that door."

James Mallory threw the door open. In the opening stood Valeria—the supposed Mrs. Parker—in her maid's costume. She was calm, unrufiled, and smiling cynically.

Just behind her stood Mrs. van Dietrich, more dignified than ever. One hand rested protectingly on her maid's shoulder.

Nick fixed his keen gaze on Valeria's face. It was clear, and there was not the vestige of a bruise on it.

The impact of Nick Carter's hard knuckles could not have failed to leave a mark which would still show more or less prominently on the fair skin of the woman.

There are men—and women—who make a specialty of removing traces of injuries to the flesh. They call themselves "black-eye artists," "skin rectifiers," and so forth, and they do their work very well. But none of them has yet learned to make a bruised face look normal inside of a few hours. Always can be discerned traces of the injury, especially when it is scrutinized with such keenness as Nick Carter was bringing to bear just now.

"Is this the woman?" asked Savage.

Nick Carter stepped a little closer to her and asked her to take off her glasses. She did so, and he peered straight into her eyes.

She met his gaze without flinching, while a mocking smile played about the corners of her mouth.

At the same time she knew the detective had penetrated her disguise. The only question was, what would he do?

"Is she the woman you saw at the safe in the small hours of this morning?" repeated Savage.

Nick Carter continued to gaze steadily at the smooth face—which, notwithstanding that it had been made up carefully to look older than it really was, yet showed the unmistakable plumpness of youth in the cheeks, while the entire absence of any sagginess at the chin also disproved the pretense of age—and at last shook his head slowly.

"Do you mean this is not the woman?" asked Savage.

"She is not the woman," returned Nick Carter calmly.

"I'm glad you said that, Colonel Pearson," declared Mrs. van Dietrich. "Because I knew she was not—could not be. She came to my room about eleven o'clock last night, and has never left it till now. I was awake all night, and Mrs. Parker has sat by my bedside attending to me in a way that I must say Mary Cook never did. It would have shocked me dreadfully if anything could have been proved against Mrs. Parker."

"Mrs. Parker is not the woman I am after," Nick Carter assured her.

He placed a certain emphasis on the name "Parker" which escaped Mrs. van Dietrich. Even if it had been apparent to her, she would not have understood its significance.

"Have you heard anything about my jewelry?" asked Mrs. van Dietrich, turning to Mallory.

"Nothing definite, Mrs. van Dietrich," was the reply, with an oily smile peculiarly belonging to the party gentle-

man. "But I have no doubt we shall get on the track of the thief very soon."

"Don't you think the woman who was at the safe last night must be the thief who took my diamonds from the other safe?"

"It seems probable," murmured Savage. "What do you say, Colonel Pearson."

"I believe the woman who was at this safe intended to get the jewelry belonging to Mrs. van Dietrich," was the detective's reply. "Whether she got it or not I am not prepared to say."

"What shall we do about it, then?"

"Look for a woman with a black eye," was Nick Carter's prompt reply.

"She was dressed like a maid, you say?" queried Savage.

"Black gown, white apron, and white starched cuffs," answered the detective. "If she is a member of the hotel staff, it ought not to be hard to find her."

"Very easy, I should say," remarked Mrs. van Dietrich. "Mademoiselle Valeria, in the guise of Mrs. Parker, the demure, middle-aged maid, said nothing. But nothing escaped her. She saw and heard everything.

"In the meantime," went on Nick, "I have something else that I should like to mention in the presence of all who are here. I have some jewelry which may or may not have been stolen, and which I want to show to Mrs. van Dietrich."

"What?" shouted that lady. "Do you think you have found my diamonds? Oh, Colonel Pearson! If you have——"

Mademoiselle Valeria leaned forward a little. Clearly she was interested.

"I will show you what I have, Mrs. van Dietrich, and you can see for yourself. May I have the end of this table, Mr. Savage?"

Paul Savage cleared away some papers and the telephone which occupied one end of the big, flat-topped desk. As he did so, there was some shifting of the positions of those who were in the room.

Mademoiselle Valeria, as Mrs. Parker, found herself at the detective's elbow, while Mallory, Savage, and Mrs. van Dietrich were at the other side of the table.

Nick Carter took from his pocket a rather bulky package, inclosed in a newspaper, and placed it on the table.

"Now," he began, "I have some jewelry, which I should estimate to be worth about a hundred thousand dollars. It comprises brooches, bracelets, rings, necklaces, and other articles generally worn by wealthy women. They are distinctly not men's jewelry."

"Let me see them," begged Mrs. van Dietrich.

"I found these things in the possession of a woman who I believe stole them," continued Nick Carter calmly.

"The woman with the black eye?" asked Mallory.

"No. Another woman."

"Is she arrested?" demanded Paul Savage.

"Not yet."

Mrs. Parker smiled slightly, and her eyes glistened through her spectacles as if she were very much amused.

Nick Carter deliberately removed a string that held the package together, and with equal slowness opened the newspaper until it lay flat upon the table.

Still the jewelry was not yet exposed. It was wrapped up in a large fourfold sheet of blue tissue paper, such as jewelers often employ to put around their wares.

Mrs. Parker was leaning over Nick's shoulder so closely now that he could feel her chin touching his arm.

He glanced down into spectacled eyes, and paused for a moment before undoing the tissue paper.

"I wish you'd hurry, Colonel Pearson," complained Mrs. van Dietrich, with a shrug. "You can't think how anxious I am to see what you have there. I feel sure they are mine."

The detective did not reply, but, with deft fingers, pulled open the tissue paper and revealed the glittering mass of gems he had taken from Valeria's cabin on the yacht.

Mrs. van Dietrich pounced down upon them and fingered the various decorations nervously.

Nick saw a quick expression of disappointment in her face, and he knew he had not found her property even before she stepped back, with a doleful shake of the head, and wailed:

"That is not my jewelry!"

"What?" shouted Savage.

"Are you quite sure?" asked Mallory fatuously.

"Of course, I'm sure," snapped Mrs. van Dietrich. "Bless the man! Don't you think I know my own jewelry? That is not my property. I never saw those things before."

"Well, but," stammered Savage, "Colonel Pearson thinks they're yours."

"I only thought, Mr. Savage," put in Nick quietly. "I did not say positively——"

"Well, if that jewelry is not Mrs. van Dietrich's," mumbled Mallory, "whose is it?"

There was a momentary pause. Then, with the swiftness of a darting snake, a back-clothed arm, with a white starched cuff and a long, narrow, feminine hand, reached around Nick Carter!

The fingers grasped the tissue paper and drew it together, and the whole bundle was snatched from the table.

"Look out, colonel!" bellowed James Mallory.

This warning was superfluous, for Nick had jumped after the demure Mrs. Parker on the instant.

It was only because everybody rushed at once that the detective did not catch the fugitive.

But the portly form of Mrs. van Dietrich was right in front of him, while Mallory impeded him on one side and Paul Savage on the other.

There was a bang, and Mrs. Parker was outside the room, with the door closed after her.

As Nick Carter gained the corridor, he heard the clang of the metal gates of the elevator, followed by the swish that told the car was shooting upward.

"That's all very well, my lady," muttered Nick, as he stood at the elevator door, waiting for it to descend. "You haven't got away this time. I'll get you yet."

"Where did you put that maid off just now?" he asked of the elevator attendant as he stepped into the car with Mallory and Savage.

"Fifth floor!" was the reply.

"Wait a moment! Don't start the car," said Nick. Then, addressing Savage, he continued: "I wish you and Mr. Mallory would guard the bottom of the stairs while I search above. I think I can find Mrs. Parker very easily."

"She's gone to my room, perhaps," suggested Mrs. van Dietrich.

"Hardly, I think," rejoined Nick Carter, with a smile.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EGG CRATE'S SECRET.

Nick was mistaken when he said he thought he could find Mrs. Parker easily.

In the first place, she was not in Mrs. van Dietrich's room. Neither was she in her own, as Mrs. Parker, on the sixth floor.

The detective felt that patience was the only thing which could tell, and he resolved to bide his time.

One thing seemed pretty certain, and that was that the gems he had taken from Mademoiselle Valeria's safe on the yacht were really her own. He was inclined to believe that he must look elsewhere for the person who had taken Mrs. van Dietrich's jewelry.

He had known that much of the latter had been brought ashore, and he supposed it was that which had been stolen from the safe.

This other collection, which he had found in Valeria's room, he had believed would be recognized by Mrs. van D. as part of that taken when she was kidnaped.

"You see, Chick," he explained to his assistant, as the two sat in Nick's own room the next afternoon, with Hugo Dressler as a member of the council, "I was so sure that those things taken by Valeria were Mrs. van Dietrich's property, that I expected to clean up part of the case right then. Now we are farther from the end than ever."

"It's surely a mixed-up affair," assented Chick. "Here we have two lots of jewelry—at least, we had them—and only one of them belongs to Mrs. van Dietrich. Then, in addition to them, there's a third lot, tied up in Mallory and Savage's safe, that was taken from Kennedy, the mate of the *Idaline*, and which is said to belong to Lord Vinton."

"Where is Lord Vinton?" asked Dressler.

"Gone," replied Nick Carter. "Nobody seems to understand why he vanished like that, leaving all his money behind him. He gave me good assistance in beating those fellows on the yacht, and when we got him to shore he was all right, except that he was wet. Vinton went to his room to change his clothes, and that was the last seen of him in the hotel," continued Nick.

"What do you make of it?" asked Chick.

"Well, I have one idea about Vinton. It may not be correct, so I will not say what it is. If my theory with respect to him should turn out to be the right one, it will clear up part of the mystery, at all events."

"This stuff belonging to Vinton that is in the safe is supposed to be worth as much as all of Mrs. van Dietrich's, isn't it?" asked Dressler.

"About the same."

"And Mallory and Savage are taking care of it?"

"Yes."

"Is an old safe, that a woman can get through with a brace and bit? Do you suppose that Mallory and Savage are to be trusted entirely?".

"I know they are not," was Nick Carter's startling reply.

"So do I," grinned Dressler.

"What do you know about them, Dressler?" asked Chick.

"Well, the story that got to our office in New York was that they had bought this hotel on a shoe string; that it is mortgaged from the cellar to the roof garden and clear out to the end of the golf links, and that their scheme is to get some people here as guests to make it seem as if the hotel is doing a rushing business, preparatory to unloading it on some person or company of persons, who won't inquire too deeply."

"That is the truth," nodded Nick Carter. "I did not know that it had got out generally, however. About three-quarters of the people living in the hotel pay little or nothing. They are 'plants' put in by Mallory to fill up and make a front."

"I thought that," remarked Dressler, grinning. "That man Mallory is so crooked a lead pencil won't stay in his waistcoat pocket."

"However, that's not the point now," went on the detective. "We have to find the woman who was trying to break into that safe. It was not Mrs. Parker, we know, because the accidental punch I gave her could not fail to result in a bad black eye. Where is the woman with the eye?"

"She was dressed like a maid——" began Dressler.

"That's nothing. She could have worn any disguise to help her in her job with the safe. She may be a perfect stranger here," remarked Chick.

"No. She belongs to the hotel," corrected Nick Carter positively. "We know that she did not get out again, because we watched the exit, and the fact that she could move about the hotel—as she must have done to get into that room—without exciting the suspicions of the clerk behind the desk, the night porter, and the elevator man, proves that she was not a stranger."

"Have you asked the people in the hotel whether they can help you?" inquired Dressler.

Nick Carter smiled.

"My dear Dressler," he answered, "do you think I should be likely to overlook such an elementary detective item as that? Of course I have asked them. They tell me that they did not see any of the maids about the lower part of the house except the housekeeper, Mrs. Cora Joyce."

"Well?"

"That doesn't help us any, you see," replied Nick. "But I do want to find out what became of Mrs. Parker after she took that jewelry from the table in the managers' private office."

"She isn't in Mrs. van Dietrich's rooms," remarked Chick. "She hasn't been there since last night, and the old lady is as mad as a wet hen about it, too."

"She hasn't been seen about the hotel, either, has she?" asked Nick.

"Nobody's had a glimpse of her, that I can find out."

"Well, you two keep a watchful eye for the maid with the black eye. I'm going to look over the register. Several people came this morning, I understand."

Nick went down to the office and spent a few minutes scanning the register. When he had fixed in his mind all the names of those who had come this morning, and had been told that there had been no departures, he made a few notes in a memorandum book he always carried, and retired to the café, to smoke a meditative cigar.

He had come nearly to the end of his perfecto, and was

glancing over a New York paper that he had just got from the news stand, when he heard the voice of James Mallory raised in astonishment, and he saw the manager talking earnestly to an elderly man, with a white beard and large, heavy-rimmed spectacles.

The elderly man looked like a farmer, and through a window near him Nick Carter saw a spring wagon of the type known in some parts of the country as a "democrat."

The horse was fastened to a hitching post in the rear of the hotel, and in the wagon were several crates such as are used for eggs.

The tops of the crates were covered with sacks, so that Nick could not see whether there were eggs in them or not.

"Strange that Mallory should be buying eggs for the hotel himself," thought Nick. "I wonder why he doesn't leave it to some of his hired help in the kitchen department."

Mallory and the old man walked down the corridor, and Nick observed that the farmer—if that was what he was—seemed to have had rheumatism badly enough to make him walk very much bent.

The pair went down the corridor and disappeared around a corner, taking a hallway which would lead to the kitchens and storerooms.

The detective strolled carelessly to the window, took a long look at the spring wagon, and then went back to his retired seat in the café.

He prepared to go through another page of his paper, when he happened to glance over the top of the sheet as he folded it.

"Jove!" he muttered.

James Mallory and the old farmer were just disappearing through the doorway into the private office.

Nick hurried to the telephone in the lobby, and asked the girl to give him a certain room number. It was that of his assistant Chick.

"Come down to the café, Chick. Come at once!" was all the detective said.

In less than two minutes Chick was at his side. He whispered a few words of instruction to his assistant. Then he went down the corridor and strolled about while he smoked another cigar.

He seemed to be in deep thought.

Chick was at the peephole already referred to, and which had been left unsecured since Nick had used it the night before. It was not difficult for Chick to move it far enough to one side to enable him to see what was going on in the managers' office.

He did not understand what reason his chief had for desiring to know the particulars of the interview between Mallory and this old farmer. But it was Chick's habit to obey without questioning when he got a straight order like this, and he said nothing.

Ten minutes passed, with Chick looking and listening at the peephole. He was in a shadow, where he would not be noticed by any one passing along.

Meanwhile Nick Carter strolled the whole length of the extensive corridor and lobby and back again three times, puffing slowly at his cigar.

When he came back the third time, Chick beckoned him over.

"Look here, chief! There's something queer going on in there."

"What is it?"

"That old guy with the white whiskers has his pockets full of jewelry, given to him by Mallory. Some of it came from the safe, and some from a hole in the floor, under the rug in that corner. There is a sort of box or trap there."

"Do you know what the jewelry looked like?"

"The same as all of it—bracelets, rings, necklaces, and so on. There's an awful big bunch."

"As big as Mrs. van Dietrich's stuff?"

"Two or three times as much. Look out! The old geezer is coming out. Get in here, in this recess."

Nick Carter was only just in time to hide, when the old man came out, and, after a quick but shrewd glance about him, slipped out of a side door and over to his wagon.

Through the window in the café the detective observed his doings.

The old fellow climbed into the wagon, and slyly dropped into one of the egg crates several handfuls of glistening gem-studded ornaments.

So quickly and deftly did he accomplish this, that if Nick had not been watching with unusual sharpness, he never would have seen the jewelry at all.

"So!" muttered Nick. "I guess I didn't come down here to Delaware for nothing, after all."

He waited till the old man had returned to the hotel, and saw him go back into the office, which was closed on him quickly.

Like lightning, Nick Carter shot out of the door.

In less than a minute he had lifted the crate containing the jewelry out of the wagon and carried it into the corridor.

He had only just time to hide the crate around the corner on the way to the kitchen when the old man came out again. This time he was accompanied by James Mallory.

The two of them went to the wagon, and the farmer climbed in.

A shout of amazement and dismay rang out on the late afternoon air. The old man raised his two fists and shook them at Mallory.

"You cursed crook!" he howled. "You always were, and now you're giving me the double cross!"

He jumped out of the wagon, fairly on top of the fat manager.

The two rolled on the ground and pummeled each other like a couple of bums on a barroom floor.

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEXPECTED ROUND-UP.

The fight was not a long one.

"Chick!" shouted Nick Carter.

"I'm coming," was Chick's response.

"So am I," added Hugo Dressler, as he came jumping out of the doorway, on Chick's heels.

By the time they got to the wagon Nick had straightened up the farmer with one movement and pulled off his white beard in another.

"Holy murder!" shouted Chick. "Lord Vinton!"

"No, Chick!" corrected Nick Carter. "Not Lord Vinton! This is our old acquaintance, Con Lonergan, the diamond sneak!"

The face, bereft of whiskers and beard that Nick had turned up to the sky with a skillful twist of his knuckles

in the supposed farmer's collar, was that of Lord Vinton, except that it needed shaving now, and certain ugly lines which had been carefully smoothed out when he was playing the part of a wealthy English nobleman, showed plainly in the waning afternoon light.

Lonergan grinned, but it was the grin of a hyena who would like to tear with his fangs everybody in reach.

"You have the goods on me, Carter!" he snarled. "Why didn't you take me before? I didn't suppose I could fool you with any kind of disguise. Especially when I had been laid out as I was in that bedroom before I helped you to get away with those fellows on the yacht."

"I suspected you from the first, Con," was Nick Carter's composed reply.

"Why didn't you take me, then?"

"You never knew me to make an arrest till I was ready, did you?"

"No! Curse you!" growled Con Lonergan. "That's one of the reasons you always make it stick when you do get a man. What's the charge now?"

"Oh, I'll take you for that Maiden Lane job. You managed to get past the dead line in New York, somehow. But you know, as well as I, that it is foolish to do that."

"Of course I know it," was the surly rejoinder. "Only, I like to play the game for all it is worth, and, especially, when I can give the laugh to the New York cops. But you know I am not alone in this job, don't you?"

"You mean the Maiden Lane job?" asked the detective.

"No. This Van Dietrich job. There's others in it besides——"

James Mallory made a sudden movement.

"Chick!" called out Nick Carter warningly.

Chick understood. He had his hand on Mallory before the manager could sneak into the house, as he evidently intended.

"Put 'em on him," directed Nick curtly.

A pair of handcuffs were on James Mallory's wrists before he realized what was going to happen, and, at the same instant, Con Lonergan—formerly Lord Vinton—was secured in the same way.

The two prisoners were marched into the private office, where they found Paul Savage looking at the empty safe in amazement.

"It's all right, Savage. They'll get you, too," growled Mallory, as he was led in. "You can't pretend innocence."

"What's it all about?" asked Savage, and Nick Carter believed the surprise was genuine.

"Robbery, Mr. Savage," replied the detective. "You'll please stay in this office—unless you can tell me which woman about this hotel has a black eye."

"I can do that," was the unexpected response. "I've just found such a woman, and I believe she is the one who tried to get into that safe. I'll bring her down if you like."

"Do so," said Nick. "You know that this precious partner of yours has been in conspiracy with Con Lonergan here, and, probably with the woman who has a black eye, to steal all the jewelry that was in your safe, don't you?"

Without answering, Paul Savage went to the telephone, and Nick heard him tell somebody to come to the office at once.

When he had finished telephoning, Savage turned to the detective.

"I can prove that I had nothing to do with this. I am a hotel keeper, not a thief," he said, in steady tones.

"If you are a hotel keeper, you'd better continue to manage the Hotel Amsterdam," returned Nick dryly. "I wouldn't try to unload, if I were you; at least, not under false pretenses. You understand—don't you?"

Paul Savage was silent. He did understand. He took a seat at the table, and while Chick and Dressler stood guard over the two prisoners, who were hustled to the inner room, to be out of sight of anybody who might come in, Nick Carter waited for the coming of the woman with the black eye.

He did not know who she was, and it was with considerable curiosity that he looked toward the door, when, in response to a knock, Paul Savage threw it open.

The woman who stood there, in her black gown and white apron, had an undoubted black eye. She had put powder on the bruise, but it was impossible to hide it altogether.

"That is the woman!" said Nick sternly. "I can swear to her. Every movement, every line of her figure, the tint of her hair, the poise of her head—all are those of the person who was trying to open that safe!"

"The safe?" cried the woman, trembling. "Why——"

"Don't deny it," said Nick quietly. "There is the accidental bruise you got when you were trying to break away from me. And—— Wait! Let me see your wrist!"

She tried to keep away, but the detective seized her hand, pushed back the white cuff a little, and showed purple marks—the marks of fingers—on her white wrist.

"I have rather a hard grip when I am at all excited," remarked Nick coolly. "I held her tighter than I intended, perhaps. But those are my finger marks on her wrist. Who is this woman, Mr. Savage?"

"She is Mrs. Cora Joyce, our housekeeper!" replied Paul Savage slowly, as if he could not believe his own eyes.

"Bah!" burst out from Con Lonergan. "Mrs. Joyce? She is Kansas Mame, and she's the one that squealed on me now."

"I'm not, Con!" hissed the housekeeper. "You lie! I never squealed on anybody."

"You can't tell me that!" roared back the other. "I had this all framed up as neat as anything could be, and I'd have pulled it off but for you. What right have you to butt in, anyhow? Mallory and you were in cahoots to beat me, and I know it. Well, if I go to the pen, you'll put in a few years at Auburn, anyhow."

Nick Carter and Chick waited in the office until a squad of police came with an automobile to take the three prisoners to the police station in the town, five miles away. Then Nick turned to Savage and beckoned him to the inner room, while Chick and Dressler remained in the outer one.

"Look here, Savage!" began the detective, "I know just what your scheme is with this hotel, and I have known it all along. That was what brought me down here, in fact."

"I suppose so," grunted Savage. "But what can you do? I haven't fooled anybody except myself, have I? There are people here who don't pay much board, and

some who don't pay any. Well, what of that? When a man has something to sell, he makes as good a showing as he can. It's up to the other fellow to find out what he's getting for his money."

"I'd be honest about it, if I were you. I'll tell you why. There is this reporter down here, ready to write up all that has happened in the hotel in the last few days. If he prints all he knows, the house will get such a setback that you won't get any price."

"Of course he will write it up," returned Savage. "It's up to me to get busy and close my deal before it is printed. I'm to see a man in New York early in the morning. I can get there before this has a chance to get into the paper."

Nick Carter laughed as he shook his head confidently.

"No, sir. You can't beat the telegraph. Dressler will fire in his story over the wire, and it will be on the streets of New York before you are."

"Well, what do you ask me to do?"

"Just what I have said. Give me your word that you will not try to dispose of this hotel without letting the other side know all the facts—business facts, I mean—and I'll keep it all out of print."

Savage was silent for a few moments. Then he held out his hand, which Nick Carter took.

"I'll do it, Carter," he said huskily. "I need not ask if you will do your part. I know you will. Keep it out of the paper, and I'll be perfectly square. There's one thing: If I were to break my word, you could always have the story printed."

"You won't break your word, Savage," returned the detective. "I don't think you are the most virtuous man in the world, but at least you are not a liar."

The manager's hard face twitched. The one good trait in him had been picked out by Nick Carter, and Paul Savage was proud that the great detective was willing to give him a chance on that account.

"Say, chief!" called out Chick, who had been in the lobby, and came running into the outer office. "What do you think is coming off?"

"What?" asked Nick Carter.

"Why, that peach of yours, Mademoiselle Valeria, came down in the elevator ten minutes ago, and I followed her out, to see what she would do. She has been registered here as Mrs. Willoughby van Tone, of Boston."

"I thought so. I intended to visit Mrs. van Tone this evening," replied Nick. "I picked the name off the register this afternoon. Where is she?"

The detective had dashed out of the office, and was halfway up the main corridor before Chick could get a chance to speak.

When Chick did speak, he showed his chief that it would be hopeless to chase the elusive beauty just then.

"That yacht of hers, the *Idaline*, has come into the bay, within a short distance of the hotel, and she will soon be aboard."

They had reached the side of the hotel looking over the bay.

The *Idaline* was steaming rapidly toward the open sea, and they thought they could discern a long white scarf derisively waving in the wind from the deck.

"It's a woman holding it," said Chick, after staring until his eyes ached.

"Of course it is," acquiesced Nick Carter. "It is Valeria. Well, I've said I will get her yet. And I will."

THE END.

"The Crime of the White Hand; or, Nick Carter Worked It Out," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 126, out February 6th. It tells more of the efforts of the detective and his assistants to "get" the elusive and resourceful criminal, Valeria.

RUBY LIGHT.

By BURKE JENKINS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 120 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

LONG CHANCES.

Then it was that I first began to give serious thought to the bit of newspaper I still had crumpled up in my side pocket, but in spite of me I couldn't see how even his knowledge of it had brought about such behavior. But long wonderment was spared me, for I soon sensed action.

They were quiet enough about it, but it is impossible to launch a small boat overside in absolute silence, especially when the falls are situated directly overhead.

Noiselessly I started to unscrew the heavy glass of the porthole of my stateroom, first having doused the light.

It was the whaleboat that was bobbing there below me, and I watched until I had counted nine fellows on the thwarts, each with his oar. One took the steering sweep.

The men, so far as I recognized them by the light of the rising moon, were fellows I had seen about the decks; but then came a bit of surprise, for three small, wiry men sprang nimbly to the stern sheets.

I could swear that I had never set eyes on any of them before, and somehow I felt that they were *different*. But still the bow man clung to the out-pole.

Then there dropped into the double-ended craft little Stevens. Then Stroth.

"Give way!" he whispered.

The oar blades caught evenly and smoothly, then fell immediately into a long, swaying stroke; and an eddy of phosphorescence whirled in the wake. They were off.

Where? And what did it mean?

I had learned enough of the size of the crew to know that, with the exception of the three men I had never before seen, every man jack of them had quitted the vessel except old Steve and the Jap, Saki.

Again, I had seen enough of rowing work to appreciate that such precision and rhythm had been acquired only by hard drill, and I could read into those lusty backs a speed for the light whaleboat which would keep many a motor launch humping.

But what was up, anyway? My curiosity was boiling; then I recollected that it had been but a command that

had sent me to my stateroom to remain till morning. There had been no promise on my part.

"I'm going to have a look at that newspaper, anyway," I grunted, as I turned the knob of my door. Almost as a surprise I felt it yield. I had not been locked in, and the light in the saloon beyond was still burning. Even the eventful newspaper lay just where he had slapped it down in his nervousness.

I tiptoed toward it, and caught it up. For some moments I couldn't see for the life of me a thing on that page of the slightest importance, and I was beginning to wonder if, by some mischance, the pages had been turned. Then my eye lighted upon this obscure item:

"BABYLON, L. I.—Doctor and Mrs. Rydall-Vaughn have just left for a flying trip to Canada, where the doctor has caught wind of a rare old set of colonial silver.

"Those who know the genial doctor will understand with just what zest he enters thus upon a trail that will add to his wonderful collection of valuable plate.

"Their shore-front villa, Solacrest, will be left to the caretaker for a fortnight."

There was a little more to it, but I had already caught enough. And it took little persuading to justify my conscience in lifting the embargo on my actions. I simply had to do something or burst.

With the lightest footfall I could muster, I mounted the companionway stairs to the deck, on which the moon was now shining clearly.

At first I thought I had the deck to myself, but a chuckle whirled me to a view of old Steve, perched on the gear box of the wheel.

"I reckon you'd better go back, son," said he. "Orders is orders, y' know." He lolled in an easy attitude, but I caught the glint of a rifle snuggled into the crook of his elbow.

"In that case," I laughed in return, "I guess I had better."

A screech, semimuffled by the distance, came to us from forward.

Startled in spite of myself, I turned in amazement.

Old Steve cursed, then added:

"Never did have no use fer them durned yellers abo'd a boat, nowav. Yer see, that cussed Jap has been hitting the dope pipe in his bunk ag'in. An', o' course, he's just bit upon the worst time fer a-doin' of it. Ef he keeps it up much louder, he'll wake the young missis. Dreaming dragons, I reckon! Don't it beat all what some folks call fun?"

Personally I am glad that yellow-faced Oriental did smoke opium that particular night, and did, the next instant, let out a more fiendish shriek than usual.

For, after more fluent profanity, old Steve so far forgot his part as to trot toward the forecastle hatch, purposing, I take it, to boot the Jap into silence.

It gave me my minute. And I lost no time taking it, for I had already spied the slender canoe, which had not been brought aboard again, and was lightly tied at the starboard ladder.

My get-away was simplicity itself, and, after two or three minutes of muffled paddling, I got enough clear water between me and the vessel to justify throwing further caution to the winds. So I put all my beef into that longer paddle, and the light canoe responded prettily.

Although I couldn't yet see the whaleboat ahead, I naturally knew the course as well as they did. Babylon for the general heading—Doctor Rydall-Vaughn's "Solacrest" the exact spot. I'll bet I knew the house better than even they did, for I had once been detailed to watch that collection of plate during a reception.

The light wind that was beginning to ripple the calm water was with me, and I made splendid time; even better time, I argued, than the boat I was following. Twenty minutes of this strenuousness proved I was right, for the passing of a light scud from the face of the moon cleared things before me.

There they were, and they were rowing slower now—an easy, swaying stroke. So I gauged my distance, and kept it—even until the dark shore line was but a short quarter mile off.

Here they shifted course a bit, running parallel to the beach. Fifteen more minutes, and they stopped.

Above the low shore line showed the dark outline of the dwelling, a dim light glinting in an upper window.

The whalehoat stopped, oars trailing. There followed a moment's hesitation, then the two forward oars dipped measuredly, and they crept toward the beach. The bow fellows sprang out, and drew her up on the shingle.

I watched closely, for my guesses were all coming out correct. Sure enough, only three men quitted the craft, before it was once more quickly shoved offshore to wait. Yes, I knew expert cracksmen when I saw them.

Then came my dilemma. What was my part to be? I had quixotic qualms no longer; but—Stella?

I must have arrived at my course of action in some subconscious way, for I bear no recollection of reasoning it out. I simply remember cupping my palms to my mouth, and bellowing for all the lung power that was in me:

"Ahoy! Solacrest! Ahoy, *ahoy!*"

It was unything for a warning, and I did wake echoes before I caught up my paddle again, and whirled the canoe in retreat.

I got it going in good fashion, then stole a hasty glance over my shoulder. That yell of mine had done the trick, for in a second the entire house was flooded with electricity. A switch had been thrown. The alarm was sounded, and I saw three figures running toward the water, in flight.

Then I dug deep again, keeping low, for I somehow anticipated what came—a rifle shot.

The bullet zinged by me, and spat into the water beyond.

I angled toward shore, reasoning that my outline would be lost in the greater dimness.

There were no more shots, and inside of five minutes I knew that I was safe. But safe for what?

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO SURPRISES.

Of course, one way, I had simply to run the canoe up on the beach, step from it, walk to the nearest railway station, and take train to headquarters.

But I did no such thing. Instead—though my muscles ached with the added effort—I skirted the shore a bit more, then veered the bow for the open bay again.

I found myself headed back for the schooner, with some idea working away at the back of my head, though I hadn't the slightest idea what it was. I simply felt

that I must reach the vessel as fast as my arms could bring me there.

Of course, I must get the girl away from danger. Such was the thought that flashed to me, for it had suddenly come to me that she was in some trouble—the environment, I suppose. It couldn't have been anything else, for certainly Stroth, whatever manner of man he was at heart, had manifested nothing but the gentlest of affection for Stella.

The fact remains that I did cover the distance across the bay—no inconsiderable stretch, those will agree who know the waters. In fact, there are some that will deny that I made it. But I did, and in record time.

But before I reached the schooner—in fact, just as I was about able to make out the contour of the island behind which she lay, there loomed up before me against the sky the dark outlines of a sail.

A catboat it proved, and she glided to my right in that weird somberness of a sailing craft's night noiselessness.

Of course, there was nothing unusual about the occurrence—moonlight sails in midsummer are common enough on that bay, in all conscience, but perhaps it was that I had my eyes peeled for everything.

I scanned the boat closely as she slipped by with a faint gurgle at the bows.

It was just as she was abreast that I got my surprise, for the helmsman of the small craft just then struck a match for his cigar, palming the flame. The face was lighted by the glow.

It was Pawlinson!

He didn't see me, for I had stopped paddling at first sight of the sail, and in thirty seconds the catboat was again swallowed up in the gloom.

This new development I felt might mean much, one way or another. And it did. Nor was I long in realizing how he had become informed of the schooner's dismasting. My premonition of that wireless clipping had not proven groundless, for few sailing schooners carry the apparatus, and Pawlinson would make his own deductions.

"But how in thunder," I growled to myself, "could he guess the spot?"

It was no time for long pondering, however; my lead on the whaleboat, even with their delay to reembark the three men, was none too great.

I saw no better plan than to follow my original intention of revisiting the schooner.

Ten more minutes at the paddle brought me well within earshot of any excitement that might be going on aboard her. But she lay there in absolute silence.

I drew closer. Not a sign of life appeared aboard, except the dim glimmer of the cabin lamp through the ports. I scanned the decks, but saw not even old Steve. Then, before boarding the schooner, I scoured the moonlit waters over which I had just come. Not a thing could I discern. Evidently some greater delay had occurred to the whaleboat.

"Probably giving a blind course against possible pursuit by another boat," I said to myself. "Well, so much the better for me."

I drew alongside the rail noiselessly, and made the canoe fast, then stepped to deck. My first stride across the planks tripped me, and a groan came from the bundle I felt at my feet. It was old Steve, trussed up nicely by some fellow who certainly knew knots. And a welt across the pate, which showed even in the moonlight, gave evidence as to how he had been taken unawares.

I freed him with my jackknife just as he began to regain consciousness. But I had no time to waste upon him now, for the grip of a sudden and growing terror was on me. So I simply doused him with a deck bucket, then sprang for the main companionway.

Instinctively I made immediately toward a hastily scrawled note that had been propped up for view on the center table. I caught it up, and drew close to the lamp. This is what I read:

"Father: I am still numb with bewilderment at what Captain Pawlinson tells me. Of course, I realize that there must be some dreadful mistake, but I can run no chance of bringing upon you what he threatens if I fail to go with him.

"I'm all in a daze, but I still love you, daddy.

"Stella."

Yes, it hit me hard—so hard, in fact, that I reeled an instant with faintness, as I saw clearly the fitting cogs of what had actuated the scoundrel Pawlinson all along.

Then I recollected that I had descried the vague outline of another person in the cockpit of the catboat I had passed, though the light had not been great enough for recognition. It was Stella!

There still was a chance, though. And it meant quick action, for I suddenly remembered the dory launch. The catboat had not much of a start of me.

So I grabbed a pencil from the little cabin desk, and filled in the blank space below the dear girl's note to her father:

"Stroth: I beat you back to the schooner and have just read this.

"I'm off to bring her back to you. Until then I'm mum.

"After that it may be different. Grey."

Then to deck, where I paid no attention to old Steve's first babblings of coherence. I ran out on the port outpole, and dropped into the dory launch, breathing thanks that its gasoline tank had been replenished that very afternoon. And I certainly was glad enough to rest my aching shoulders, and let the engine work.

I determined to abandon all idea of overtaking the catboat itself, for I reasoned that the nearest railroad station would, by four out of five chances, be the objective. So I crowded the willing little motor for all she was worth, and for the third time since the sun set I crossed the bay.

CHAPTER XX.

THE STALWART PARSON.

At a sort of semipublic dock, run by an old codger who slept in a shack at its end, I moored the launch, singing out to the old man, whose tousled head popped inquisitively from a window, that I had been out with a broken-down battery. He grunted willingness to mind the craft, and I sped up the wharf to the street.

It was a breath-robbing run to the station, but I would have caught the "milk train" that was just pulling out if, upon rounding the depot's corner, I hadn't tripped across an extended leg.

I berated the fellow heartily enough, but would have

let it pass for an accident, had the man not snapped out, as he collared me:

"Well, not just yet a while, my friend!"

Then we grappled, and swayed back and forth, until we swung nearer the station lantern. Its radiance showed us to each other, and we fell apart in amazement.

"Why, you, Grey? Alive? Pawlinson said the gang had done for you in Portland Harbor!"

It was Wainwright, a fellow detective.

"Oh, so Pawlinson said that, did he?" I cried. "Well, I think I'll have a different story to tell about Pawlinson. But not now, Wainwright. Here, quick, Jack! Did Pawlinson just board that train?"

"Exactly." Wainwright dropped all banter at my tone. "Just arrived, and with a girl, too. Told me to stop any one who might be in pursuit. He's the captain, y' know. Stationed me here for the very purpose; brought me out from New York, y' know."

"And the next train?" I queried anxiously.

"Not for two hours."

"My Lord!"

"Is it as bad as all that, Grey? Can't you let me in on the thing? If you just must get word to Pawlinson, maybe I could catch him at the Long Island ferry-house."

Of course, the chap's deduction that I wanted to report to Pawlinson, as my chief, was natural enough, but I couldn't repress my cynicism.

"Why, how could you get to Long Island City before I could?" I demanded.

He drew me to the station's edge, and pointed to a motor cycle standing there.

"That's the way I came from town," said he. "You never can tell when they'll come in handy."

Exactly an hour and thirty-five minutes after I mounted the saddle, I chugged into the wagon entrance at the ferryhouse of Long Island City. The towns I had passed along that well-kept Merrick Road I remember only as blurs.

"But I had missed the boat that connected with the milk train by a scant ten minutes.

The trail was hot, though, and hope bubbled in me as I reached the New York side on the next boat, and made my way to a cabman who was tying a nosebag to his wreck of a nag. I knew the fellow, and knew him for the shrewdness that was his.

"Howly Moike! An' it's Misther Grey!" he exclaimed.

"Exactly, Dennis, and you can help me. You had your eye peeled for fares on that last boat?"

"Aye, that I did, sor; but 'twas Shaney that beat me to ut, that time. An' I'm thinking there wuz more'n usual in it; considering as how I heard where that same couple o' doves wuz bound; 'cause, y' see, a feller'll loosen up somethin' splendid when he's meditatin' matermony."

"Here, here, Dennis!" I said, with authority in my tone. "Put it straight and quick!"

He shifted to conciseness on the second:

"To put it brief like, then, sor, 'twas after being married the feller was after."

"How do you know that?"

"Why, sor, belike 'tis a kind o' inference o' me own; but 'twas no great guess at all. Fer didn't I hear the address he give Shaney when he handed the smart-lookin' gal in? I did. And wasn't that same address the wan of the only parson in town as would tie them kind o' knots at this hour o' the marning? It was."

"Ricaby?" I cried. For Ricaby was much in the papers then: an eccentric old clergymen, and a fighter in his way.

"The same," agreed Dennis; then added, with a shrewd grin: "An' they've fifteen minutes' start of ye, Misther Grey; so ye'd better get that there gas horn o' yourn a-humpin'."

"I know the parson's street," said I, as I mounted from the curb. "But the number, Dennis?"

"'Tis two hundred and forty-one West." Then the cabby in him came to fore: "An' mebbe, belike, sor, you'll be after wantin' a rig betimes?"

"I certainly hope I will," I replied feelingly. "You follow as fast as you can."

"Aye, that I will, sor," I heard his voice behind me as I made off again.

Had the distance been greater, I should undoubtedly have overhauled the cab ahead. But, as it was, the half mile or so to the minister's unassuming house was against me. Of course, I hadn't the ghost of an idea what I intended to do when I did catch up, but action was absolutely essential to me in the fire of the fury that was mine then, and had been since I saw Stella's note to her father.

I rounded the final corner, and, sure enough, there stood a one-horse cab at the curb, about midway down the block. It was then about seven o'clock.

I covered the distance, and ran the cycle to the curb. Four leaps up the stoop brought me to the bell, an old-fashioned "pull" affair, which I jangled almost to a break.

Brushing by the slattern that opened the door, I stated no mission, but whirled into the parlor to one side of the hall. The room was empty, but a monotonous drone of a deep-toned voice came from behind a drawn portière.

I strode over, and threw back the hangings. The voice ceased.

I shall remember the picture some time; for, before me, but with her back to me, stood Stella, her bit of a sunburned hand caught in Pawlinson's. Dominie Ricaby faced me—tall, austere, forbidding. The others, of course, couldn't see me.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded the parson, as he caught sight of me.

My reply was calculated to stop the marriage. Oh, I made it sure; for I could take no chances with Pawlinson. To Stella I could explain later.

"That woman," I cried defiantly; "that woman is my wife!"

I have often since marveled at the power of the grip of that tall old man; for Pawlinson, as he whirled for me, was putty in the hands that settled to his shoulders from behind.

"Somehow, I liked it not from the beginning!" Dominie Ricaby's tone was as even as ever. "The woman seemed too unwilling. You and I will wait, sir; until they are gone, anyway."

And the nod he gave me I acted upon—an easy enough thing in the absolute daze that had fallen upon Stella. I carried, rather than led her, to the street.

Dennis was there, and ready. I put her in the cab; then, before taking my place beside her, I stole a moment to run the blade of my penknife into the rear tire of the motor cycle.

I even took the added precaution against pursuit of handing a greenback to the other cabman. He looked inquiringly at Dennis, who nodded emphasis; then I entered and slammed the door as both cabs made off.

The rumble of the sorry vehicle seemed to shake the bewildered girl from her lethargy. A struggling, pitiful little smile came into the tearful eyes she turned up to me.

But gigantic relief was in her sigh as she threw herself on my shoulder.

"Oh, Tom!" she said.

Then I kissed her; for there was love in the name as she said it. Tom is not a bad name, anyway.

CHAPTER XXI.

A BIG HUNCH.

The ferryhouse once more, and with it came realization of the necessity for quick decision and explanation. There was much to follow, I felt—and I was right.

We left the cab and caught a boat, but the next train on the southern division didn't leave for twenty-five minutes.

But my chagrin at this particular delay found no echo in Stella. Of course, I naturally counted upon some interference, officially or otherwise, from Pawlinson, who could easily enough reckon upon just the course we were pursuing.

"But he'll not follow us, Tom," she said. "It'll be worse than that—his alternative. That's why I went with him!"

"What do you mean, dear?" I turned in interest from the ticket window, and led her toward the station dining room. I long ago learned that breakfast helps mightily, under any circumstances.

Our quick order was given, and we were seated opposite each other; then she told me.

"Maybe you yourself know more than I do, Tom," she said quietly, but I could read the suffering in her voice. "He told me things about father that I do not believe; but I could afford to take no chance on their being true. It is incomprehensible—unheard of. He told me that all those robberies that have filled the papers about——"

"Stop!" I interrupted her. "I have heard the story, too. It is of really no moment right now. What we must determine is——"

"Of no moment?" she queried, in a pained tone. But I saw the tears starting, so I half lied:

"I said, dear, that I had heard that *story*, too. We've no time to waste. I must know this: What do you know about this man Pawlinson, anyway?"

"Why, didn't you know that he was father's captain before I went to the convent in France, three years ago?"

"Captain of the *Ruby Light?*" I cried, as things began to fit one to another.

"Why, yes. They had some misunderstanding, and father let him go."

"A misunderstanding?" I scented the truth. "Was the misunderstanding about—you?"

She lowered her eyes.

"Yes," she admitted.

"You spoke of an alternative. What did you mean?"

"He said that he had a schooner—one of the Fulton Market fishing fleet, already fitted out and manned. And that, unless I married him, he would head it for Fire Island. He knows as well as we do that the *Ruby Light* is not ready for sea yet. The capture, of course, would be easy. He said that father"—here the eyes once more filled—"would be sent to prison—for twenty years, at least."

"But, look here, little girl," I said. "Why, as Pawlinson is a government officer, should he take so unusual a course? It seems to me that a revenue cutter would have been a more reasonable vessel to make the chase."

"Oh, you must know Captain Pawlinson to understand," she cried. "He boasted that he would 'turn the trick' single-handed. You don't know the man, Tom."

"I'm beginning to, pretty well," I replied bitterly. "Then you think it's true about the Fulton Market schooner?"

"Absolutely," she declared. "That's why I feel sure that he won't try to follow us. Within an hour or two, I am certain, that schooner will sail for Fire Island Inlet. He had every plan arranged yesterday."

"But we'll beat him to it!" I cried heartily, as we quitted the half-nibbled breakfast, and hastened to the train gate. "I'm great on hunches, and I have a big one now."

We drew into the station at Babylon at ten o'clock, and took a hack to the water front, where the dock tender in whose care I had left the dory launch grunted a greeting, filled the tank, and palmed the coin I tipped him with.

It was a beautiful summer's sail across the glinting bay, but ours was no mood for enjoying it. Care sat too heavy; but even so, it couldn't smother the love that was ours. And, then and there, as I looked at her before me—she had the wheel, I the engine—I vowed that I'd lift the worry from her in some way if it killed me.

We rounded into the little channel where the *Ruby Light* lay in hospital, and I always love to think of the shout that went up from her decks as we were recognized.

The look in Stroth's eyes as his grip met mine spoke better than speech, and I was particularly struck with his manner of almost terrible earnestness.

He tenderly urged Stella to seek her stateroom; then turned to me eagerly.

My story was quickly told.

"So she knows?" he queried, with peculiar sadness.

"Yes, but she doesn't believe. But, sir, hadn't that better be left till later? Pawlinson, she says, is surely not faking about his part, and if we could only——" I swept my glance for the first time over the schooner.

He smiled lightly. "We have lost no time, you see. My men are trained to emergency. The *Ruby Light* can sail by dawn to-morrow."

"Then we'll make it!" I cried delightedly.

"*We?*" There was genuine amazement in him.

"Why, certainly *we*. You see, sir, I'd like it best that way. Besides, Stella and I have——"

"What!" He caught me by the shoulders before him, and held me close in rigid scrutiny. Ten seconds—and the grasp relaxed.

"Good!" he said. "And I never guessed it!"

Once more our right hands met. There can be much put into a handshake between men.

"It couldn't be better," he added. "And, that being the case, I must have a talk with you after you've had a sleep."

"But why not now, sir? I'm not sleepy."

"Maybe not, but you need sleep, just the same. There are things ahead of us, and I want you fresh, my son. Besides, I have something I must attend to immediately."

So I obeyed him, and went to my stateroom, where I found that, the immediate excitement being removed, I was completely overcome with weariness. But before I actually fell asleep I heard the motor of the dory launch started again, and a peep from my porthole told the reason.

Those three "different" fellows were quitting the schooner, and they were alone!

Then I knew no more till Saki tapped his summons for dinner.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TO PREVENT DROWNING.

If you are swimming in the breakers, reflect that the approaching wave, which suddenly looks so high, will certainly lift you to its height before the foamy comber breaks about your ears. And when the passing wave sinks beneath your falling body, have no fear that you will be swallowed in the watery abyss. Nothing more exhausts an ocean swimmer than useless efforts to climb an approaching mountain of water, or to float downward more slowly than the receding wave. You can have your sport with the sea, if you will humor it and let it have its fun with you. But to pit your puny arms against the Atlantic's heavings is to violate the first rules of the game, and pay forfeit, perhaps, with life. The same rule of acquiescence has saved many a man in a tideway, and will save many more. Perhaps in your joint excess of caution and pride of strength you have dived from your boat against the tide, never doubting that you can get back again. But perhaps your submerged body is swept along with a force you never suspected, and when you have cleared your nostrils and set your face for your backward swim, you suddenly find the water stronger than you. Perhaps you are alone, or your boat is anchored, as a swimmer's boat never should be. Now, if you lose your head, you will presently lose your breath. But think; though you cannot swim a yard against a tidal current, you can swim, perhaps, a mile with it, and the case is hard, indeed, if within that distance you cannot find some source of safety.

These are thoughts for the more or less skillful, who perhaps need them most from the positions in which they place themselves, and who are not incapacitated from thinking for themselves by bewildering and unfamiliar conditions. The wholly inexperienced, it is quite certain, can do no thinking in the water. If any useful counsel could be addressed to them, it would amount to the same as that for a swimmer—humor the water. The water will float very nearly all women and most men in such a position that they can breathe, if the limbs are allowed to sink. But the arms can only be thrust higher than the head at the cost of submerging the nose. In exactly the same way, if one edge of a life preserver be depressed, its mass will turn as on a pivot and the opposite edge will rise without giving much increase of floating power. Just as nearly the whole body must be submerged to elevate the nose, so a life preserver must be wholly depressed to give its greatest floating power. Therefore, a plank or log should be grasped at its middle and not at its end; but, on the other hand, a boat should be seized at the stern instead of the middle, unless the object be to roll its gunwales under and fill it.

These thoughts are obvious to commonplaceness, yet people are more often drowned from ignorance of such simple things, or from neglect of knowledge of them, than from anything mysterious. For instance, wherever there is surf, there is undertow, which is merely the backward rush of water above which an incoming wave piles itself, only to become undertow itself in turn when the next wave tumbles in. Doubtless, sometimes rocks or shoals make an invincible current. No one should bathe in such a spot. But the undertow of a tolerable bathing beach is strongest in shallow water. When people are drowned there, they nearly always simply venture beyond their depth and cannot fairly be said to be dragged to sea. Such simple suggestions as these ought not to be necessary, and would never be offered were it not for repeated object lessons of their necessity. Swimming is such an easy and delightful accomplishment, and water is so necessary a part of every pleasuring, that not to know how to swim is almost to invite drowning. Timid parents might well reflect whether it be better policy to teach their children to swim, or to deny them great pleasures at the cost, perhaps, of death when least suspected.

BURIED BENEATH SNOW.

Some of the mountain railroads in Switzerland find it advantageous to open long before the snow melts on their upper parts, and to do this an enormous amount of snow has to be shoveled away. Last May, when the road from Glion, on Lake Geneva, up to Rocher de Naye was opened, the cars ran for some distance between walls of solid compressed snow twelve to twenty feet high.

When the work began, one of the upper stations had disappeared, and it was supposed that it had been swept away by the winter storms. A rounded elevation was recognized as the site of a water tank, and from this the position of the station was determined and excavations were begun. After digging down six feet, the shovelers struck, not the foundation, but the roof of the station, which was in its place, intact.

THE DARKEST HOUR.

It is not darkest just before dawn. The maximum of darkness begins when the sun has sunk below the horizon so far that none of its rays are refracted to the earth by the atmosphere or reflected by clouds, and continues without variation until it reaches a point near the eastern horizon, when the light reaches the earth once more, marking the commencement of dawn. It is hard to understand how such an erroneous idea came to be generally accepted.

DUMB POLICEMEN.

Little Johnny—"I don't see why the police is makin' such a fuss 'bout a baby bein' found in that empty house across the street."

Little Ethel—"They is awful dumb. They might see for theirselves that that old house isn't numbered right. The other numbers has been changed since that was put on, but, of course, the angels didn't know that there was two houses with the same number on this street."

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Missouri Ham Goes to China.

An eleven-pound ham, consigned from Rocheport, Mo., to Peking, China, was transferred at Sedalia, Mo., in the handling of parcel-post business.

It required postage to the amount of $1.42.

Warns Against Women Spies.

Sir Oliver Lodge, distinguished English scientist, declares that spies of German nationality should be shot, while British delinquents should be hanged.

"My feeling," Sir Oliver added, in the interview, "is that there are a lot of alien women about who are not even interned. They seem likely to be just as dangerous as the men. I cannot help thinking that some spy work has been in operation in connection with the explosion of the battleship *Bulwark*."

Asked why he prescribed shooting for foreigners and hanging for Britishers, Sir Oliver said:

"Shooting is a punishment you can offer an honorable gentleman whom you feel is serving his country in a way hostile to your own, but hanging is a disgraceful punishment, only appropriate to traitors."

Blind Man Saves Five Lives.

Samuel Rosenberg, eighty-four years old, of Philadelphia, Pa., who is blind and suffering from asthma, happened to be up early in the morning, and to this fact is credited the safety of five persons who were sleeping peacefully when fire broke out in their home on Winton Street just before dawn.

Rosenberg, smelling the smoke, battered on the door, and, after waking the occupants of the burning house, summoned neighbors, who carried Mrs. Michael Wagman, her sister, and her three children to safety. All had been trapped on the second story. Mrs. Wagman, who refused to leave the house until the last child was carried out, was blinded by smoke, and her sight may be permanently impaired. The house was damaged to the extent of $1,000.

The fire originated in a defective furnace in the cellar, and, after burning upward, destroyed most of the first floor.

Unearth Skeleton of a Man.

While working in a slate dump, loading slag for a filling at Imboden, a mining camp in Virginia, workmen unearthed the skeleton of a man who apparently had been dead several years. The dump has been in use for nearly twenty years and so far as known no one has disappeared from this locality and remained unaccounted for. There is much excitement throughout this section and all kinds of theories are advanced. Chief of these is that the man was robbed, murdered, and his body hidden in the slate dump.

Youth Parts With Toe to Get in the Navy.

When W. G. Southwell, a husky farmer lad of Gering, Iowa, applied at the navy recruiting station in the Federal building, at Omaha, Neb., for a job in Uncle Sam's battleship service, he passed inspection in a thoroughly satisfactory manner until the lower extremities were reached. Then it was discovered that the little toe on the right foot was of the "hammer" variety, consequently barring the farmer boy from the navy.

"Will you take me if I have the toe cut off?" queried the lad of Lieutenant Tipton, in charge of the station. Naval regulations permit the acceptance of applicants who are minus one toe, providing it is not the great toe, so Southwell received an affirmative reply. "Then off she goes," ejaculated the enthusiastic youth.

Despite the fact that a heavy cold forced him to submit to the operation without the use of a general anæsthetic, Southwell underwent the operation, and will present himself at the station for acceptance as soon as the foot heals.

He is only seventeen years old and hopes to enter the service as an apprentice seaman.

Mob Lynches a Young Negro.

Hung up by the heels and riddled with bullets by a mob of about 100 men on the banks of Lynche's River, near Lynchburg, S. C., Dillard Wilson, an eighteen-year-old negro chain-gang convict, was lynched for the murder of Mrs. Ezekiel Truluck, wife of a farmer.

Wilson went to Mrs. Truluck's house to get some milk. Returning later in the day, he attacked her with a razor, cutting her throat. As she endeavored to rise, he kicked her in the face and she fell again. The negro then called to her little son, who had been near her at the time of the attack, to come close and see his mother. The boy's cries brought neighbors.

It's a "Point-a-minute" Team.

In winning the Iowa conference championship, the Coe team also accomplished another feat which is believed stands unparalleled in the history of American football. At least, no one has been found who can relate a similar feat.

The Coe eleven established the record in the five conference games played, of making a fraction more than one point in every minute of actual playing time consumed in the five games. This has led to the recent adoption of the "point a minute" nickname for the champions. The total number of points Coe accumulated against the five opposing members of the Iowa conference was 294. The total playing time for the five games was 282 minutes—hence the point-a-minute conclusion.

Alaska Slayer Freed.

"Six months on a gold claim in the wilderness and your best friend becomes your bitter enemy." So said William R. Rodgers, miner, when he was arrested near Chicago several months ago, charged with the murder of his prospector partner on a claim on Christmas Creek, Alaska. To-day Rodgers is a free man, ready to take up chicken raising on the farm of his sister, Mrs. Charles H. Averill, at Libertyville, Ill. An Alaskan jury has just acquitted him of the charge of murder.

In May, 1913, when Rodgers was returned to Alaska

for trial, Rodgers and Frank Wixen were working the "Daisy" claim on Christmas Creek, forty-five miles west of Haines, Alaska. There was a fight out in the cabin in the wilderness, and Rodgers reached his gun first. Wixen dropped dead, with a rifle ball through his forehead.

Rodgers hit the trail to Haines, reported the shooting, and gave himself up. The body of Wixen was brought in to Haines, and a coroner's jury found Rodgers had shot and killed Wixen in self-defense. Rodgers, upon his release, came to Libertyville, Ill., in October, 1913.

One day in last August, Rodgers, who is fifty-one years old, was standing among his chickens on the farm, when he suddenly looked into four revolvers, leveled upon him by two stalwart United States deputy marshals. Rodgers raised his hands in compliance with their commands. One officer kept him covered while the other removed from Rodgers' pocket a small revolver—one which he said he carried to kill chicken hawks.

The arrest was made on a Federal indictment returned in January. Rodgers returned to Juneau, where he was placed on trial last week. The case went to the jury, and the verdict was returned ten minutes later.

"I'm coming back to the chickens," was the text of a wire which Rodgers sent out of the savage north to his relatives in Lake County.

Fouls and Saves His Fowls.

Joe Beznica, wrestler, of Akron, Ohio, heard some one in his chicken coop early in the morning. He saw through a window a man's head. The intruder, a heavyweight, heard Beznica coming, and, as the door was opened, planted his fist on Beznica's nose.

Beznica applied the strangle hold, and when his victim was limp, dragged him to the street corner and called the police.

Woman Stirs French Army.

There is a terrible stir in army circles at Dunkirk, France. The wife of a French general was arrested because she had big feet, it has been learned; and, furious at the publicity which resulted, accompanied by the heralding of facts concerning the size of her feet, life has been made uncomfortable for more than one officer.

This is how it happened: A German spy was recently captured in Dunkirk. He was dressed as a woman, but the size of his feet betrayed him, and he was captured. Then every one in Dunkirk began watching feet. The wife of the French general sallied forth, and her feet attracted the attention of a soldier. She was arrested; and now even those who had not looked before the spy scare struck Dunkirk know she has big feet.

Town's First Bride Dies.

Margaret Thuerwaechter, first white bride in the town of Calumet, Wis., and whose son Charles was the first white child born in that town, has just died. She was ninety-seven years old. She had lived with her daughter.

Indiana Cows on Cider Jag.

State veterinarian and health officers speeded to Tippecanoe County, Ind., in answer to a hurried summons from Samuel Shearer, who reported a violent epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease on his ranch. When the officials arrived, they found Bessie, a blooded Holstein, and Darby, a Jersey milker, feet upward on the sward, apparently taking the count. Investigation disclosed a cider press in an orchard and a pile of fermented apple pulp. The cows were drunk.

Huge Ferryboats Built by Germans.

That Germany is making gigantic preparations to invade England and preparing huge ferryboats with concrete decks, on which will be mounted forty-two-centimeter guns, is the statement made at Keokuk, Iowa, by Will Robert, who had been in Carlsbad, Germany, since the war broke out, and has just returned to this country.

Piece of Pipestem in Tongue.

After going for three years with a piece of bone pipestem an inch and a half long in his tongue, Thomas Crofter, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, aged sixty-two submitted to an operation for the removal of it.

It was while celebrating his birthday three years ago that Mr. Crofter, engaging in a friendly wrestling match with a son-in-law, fell on his face, with a pipe in his mouth. The stem broke and a part of it could not be found. Not until several months later did Mr. Crofter notice a swelling in his tongue. Fearing it might be a cancer, he finally consulted a physician a few days ago and discovered, much to his surprise, that he had been carrying his missing pipestem around in his tongue for three years. When the stem was removed, it was noticed that it had not even been splintered.

Beet Patch Spoils His Apples.

Oliver T. Stump, a wheat grower of upper Klickitat Valley, Wash., discovered in his orchard recently a puzzle on a seven-year-old Ben Davis apple tree. The fruit on the tree had the appearance of apples, but from skin to an imperfect seedless core it was tasteless and was of the color of the garden red beet. It appears that the freak originated by the apple-tree blossoms being pollenized from a patch of red beets growing near by.

Dies Trying to Save Dog.

Mrs. F. P. Price, wife of a Minneapolis business man, fell over a 100-foot embankment and was killed in an effort to save her poodle dog. The dog was not hurt.

Lifer Out of Solitary Cell.

Carrying his Bible, Jesse Pomeroy, sentenced to solitary confinement for life, marched in the rear of a line of sixty into the chapel of the Massachusetts State Penitentiary at Charlestown to attend religious service there for the first time.

Pomeroy was fifty-five years old recently. Half an hour before the chapel services began, the secretary of the prison commission arrived with the official papers permitting the "lifer" to attend the services, and once more Pomeroy rubbed elbows with his fellow man. He sat in the rear of the chapel and kept his eyes constantly on the Bible.

Pomeroy was committed to the prison when a youth. He was convicted of having killed a child and was suspected of other murders. In the years he has spent in solitary confinement he has educated himself and has taken a deep interest in religion. Prison officials who studied him recommended more leniency. It is unlikely

that he will ever be paroled or pardoned, however. The authorities would not feel safe in setting him free, and Pomeroy has been so long in prison that he probably would not desire freedom.

Loses His Life Driving Cow.

Alan Stanley Morgan, aged ten years, of Burnt Head, Newfoundland, met his death in a tragic manner recently. Shortly after four p. m. Morgan went with a chum to drive a cow home. Morgan caught the cow, tied a rope around its horns, and the other end he fastened around his own waist. The cow took fright and ran off at a fast clip, dragging after it Morgan, who had fallen down. The boy was dragged over about half a mile of rocky road and rough land and was dead when the cow was caught.

Ban Put on "Tipperary" Song.

The ban has been put on the marching song, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," at the naval training station at Newport, R. I., by Lieutenant Commander Evans, executive officer of the station. The song was becoming popular, but as it is the marching song of the British army, Lieutenant Commander Evans contends that it comes within the scope of President Wilson's neutrality order, and he has therefore forbidden its use by band, orchestra, or singers.

Farmer in Thrilling Feat.

A heroic feat, such as the moving-picture photographer would love to put on a film, was performed near Powhattan, Kan., when George Henderson, a farmer, saw a runaway horse, hitched to a buggy that contained the wife and little daughter of a neighbor, pass his home at terrific speed. Henderson dashed into his garage, cranked up his machine, and gave chase. He overtook the runaway horse, grasped its bridle with one hand, steering the machine with the other, and soon stopped both horse and auto, rescuing the occupants of the buggy, unharmed.

Hunter Kills Son.

William Morley, a farmer residing nine miles northeast of Standish, Mich., accidentally shot and killed his four-year-old son while unloading his rifle after returning from hunting deer.

Hunter Shot for a Bird.

As William B. Olin was working his way through a wood near Austin, Mich., to get a shot at a flock of partridges, another hunter mistook him for a game bird and emptied a charge of birdshot in Olin's back. His wounds are not serious.

Life Lost for Trifle.

Some of the letters from the front show how lives are not infrequently lost for trifles. Lance Corporal R. Casement, of the Royal Irish Regiment, tells how, when marching through a village in Belgium, a comrade stepped into a shop to buy a picture post card to send to his little girl. He was only away a few seconds, but the Germans had been following us very close, for he had to fight when he came out. But there were too many of them; he was down before any of us could get back to help him, and the red cross buried him next day with his picture card.

A sergeant of the Essex regiment stopped in the march to pick up a German helmet that he had promised to send to his little boy. A German shell burst at his side and he was blown to pieces.

One of the Middlesex soldiers left his greatcoat on the wrong side of the river, and he only discovered his loss when the bridge was broken down. He swam across to find it, and was swimming back with it when he was hit by a bullet and sank almost at once, never to rise again, though some of his chums hung about under fire for hours to see if they could be of assistance to him.

Mail from Front is Enormous.

At a meeting of the German council of ministers, the minister of posts, discussing the complaints from the people of bad service to and from the troops, stated that the daily receipts from the front included 1,500,000 letters and cards.

He added that 150,000 registered packages, 4,000 newspapers, 6,000 packages, and 10,000 money orders were sent daily to the soldiers.

Hunter is Drowned in Swamp.

Submerged in a swamp hole containing four feet of water, the body of Ora White, of Munising, Mich., was found by a passing hunter between Shingleton and Cusino. It is supposed that White, who was hunting deer, lost his way during a storm and stumbled into a hole. He was thirty-four years old and married.

Father of Nine Adopts Another.

George W. Brewer, senior, a farmer near Aberdeen, Miss., found on his front steps a baby girl, four days old, wrapped in a blanket. Although Mr. Brewer has nine children of his own, he says he will keep the child.

Another Barbara Fritchie.

South Africa has a Barbara Frietchie. She is Mrs. Pienaar, who resides at Winburg, Union of South Africa. When General de Wet, heading the rebels, captured the town, some of his troops hauled down the British flag from the courthouse and flung it in the dirt. Mrs. Pienaar snatched it up, brushed it off, and bound it around her waist.

"You daren't touch it," she declared. "I'll carry it, and when decent people return we'll hoist it again."

Dispatches say Mrs. Pienaar was cursed by the rebels, but they did not offer to molest her.

$72.50 for Kaiser's Cigar.

A cigar presented by the German emperor to Lord Lonsdale, and by him to a resident of Hambledon, was sold at auction recently at Henley in aid of the local Red Cross Hospital.

The cigar fetched $72.50, and is now the property of a local firm of butchers.

One-man Railroad Mystery.

"When the One-man Railroad grade is built an additional mile, it will be out of the woods." This is the way the people look at the efforts of Rudolph Meyer, proprietor of the "One-man Railroad," in Hodgeman County, Kan. When the work now completed is pushed forward another mile, it will be up on the flat country

that stretches off toward Garden City, fifty miles away. The grade will have reached the flat lands, that make further expensive grade work unnecessary.

But the people of Jetmore, Kan., know but little more of Meyer than any one else in Kansas. He keeps his own counsel. He will talk, and talk freely, about everything but his actual plans. He enjoys his talk with strangers, but they go away no better informed than before.

The building of this One-man Railroad grade has almost ceased to be a wonder here. For four years Rudolph Meyer has been at work on it. Sundays were no exception, and early and late his animals dragged the dirt from the pits to the tops of the grade or pulled huge stones from the side of a cañon.

The Santa Fe Jetmore branch ends here, in the lowland of the Buckner Creek valley. It is a rough country. The railroad line is pointed southwest, when it comes to the "end of the track." Meyer, when he came here four years ago, went into the country, two and a half miles, up a cañon or draw of a dry run that connects with the ever-flowing Buckner Creek, and started his grade. He began on the edge of a rocky bluff, where he leveled a grade through his formation and the red, sandy soil. He has carried this grade toward the southwest, reaching for the higher land, with evident precision, though no engineer has set the stakes, and the line and the elevation of the grade has been established by eye.

People who know, say the grade is an excellent one. When he has come to depressions that are torrents of water in the heavy downpours of rain, Meyer has brought a group or two or three of these depressions together and directed their course to one common opening under the grade, thus to cut down the number of bridges. Engineering science seems to have taught him this. These draws are not bridged, but the "fill" comes up to them and rock has been drawn there in quantity for foundations for bridges and culverts, showing aptness for railroad building.

The grade extends across many of these depressions, always dry excepting after a heavy rain, and the lay of the grade, from the viewpoint of a layman, seems to be the correct one for reaching the high, flat land off to the southwest that might lead on either to Garden City or Cimarron.

Does any one know why Meyer is building this grade? No one in Jetmore claims to have knowledge. Meyer doesn't owe any one. He has no large expense, for he lives in his own "shack," sometimes mounted on wheels and other times placed on the ground, near his work. But when he does buy things in town, he pays cash or else gives a check on a bank in Valley Falls, Kan., which is always honored.

A large share of the work on the grade of this One-man Railroad was built by using four mules, hitched abreast of two "slip" scrapers, one alongside the other. Meyer would put the lines around his shoulders, stand between the two scrapers, and fill them as the mules pulled them along, one with each hand. Then he would follow and dump them at the top of the grade. It was almost superhuman work, but day after day, with long hours, Meyer has done this.

No one here believes Rudolph Meyer is in the employ of the Santa Fe Railroad. The Santa Fe should be the only one interested, for there is no other road anywhere near. But a system like the Santa Fe would find no reason to a half dozen ways out of the Buckner Creek cañons, each as advantageous as the one selected.

Jetmore people declare the Santa Fe could easily secure a free right of way for a grade and track, yet Rudolph Meyer has paid thirty dollars an acre for all that he's used, a strip nearly four miles long. In all, it is believed he has paid $1,500 for land, and all of it with the understanding that it is to revert to the former owners if the railroad is not in operation in five years. Scarcely a year yet remains to Meyer for a portion of this grade, and still he keeps on and on.

"Are you going to build your road to Garden City?" is asked of him. "Sure," is his reply.

Others will ask if Cimarron is the intended point he hopes to reach, and he says again: "Sure."

Pressed for a statement as to the actual point to which he means to extend his railroad grade, he will say:

"See that weed up there?" pointing to any that appears prominent on the sky line of the hill to the southwest, "that's where I'm going to build."

Then he will chuckle and make you understand, in no unfriendly way, that it is none of your business.

People ask for an explanation as to such a freaky way of doing things. The people of Jetmore have no answer, for they don't know one.

Has a Trained Wrist.

There have been stories of the "man in the iron mask," the "man with the iron jaw," et cetera, and now we have the story of the "man with the performing wrist bone." His name is Lester Edward Mills, and he has just been introduced as a new inmate of the Stillwater, Minn., penitentiary. During his stay there, which may be for two and a half years, this performing wrist bone, before mentioned, can hop out of joint seven times a day and nobody will be liable for damages. Nevertheless, the performing wrist bone, according to the police and a partial confession made by the owner of said bone, has been an obedient meal ticket for Mills these last two years, perhaps longer.

On propitious occasions, generally while his person was in the custody and safe-keeping of some large firm or corporation, the wrist bone would hop out of its wonted socket and the owner of the wrist bone would soon after proceed to collect for injuries sustained. Records so far produced show that the wrist-bone meal ticket has produced some $2,000 for its owner during this year and last, which is a wrist bone better than a wish bone.

Were it not for the suspicious nature of Chief Troyer, of the Duluth police, the wrist bone might still be producing checks from corporations.

Mills boarded a street car in Duluth. He carried a suit case. The street car swung around the curve at Third Avenue west and Superior Street. Mills stumbled over his suit case. Mills did not seek to stifle the cry of pain which came to his lips. The conductor dashed forward. The hand fell limp at the wrist. The conductor looked sympathetic. He sent for a doctor and began to take names of witnesses.

On the sidewalk stood Chief Troyer. He had to have a look. Mills did not look as pale as the chief thought he should. Neither were his lips bloodless and all that sort of thing. The chief, in fact, at that moment was looking for a burglar. And why not the man with the broken wrist? He might be the man.

While the doctor was examining the wrist, the chief had a look inside the suit case. He found therein a shirt and two letters. There was nothing suspicious about the shirt, but the letters were from Minnesota attorneys and each spoke of a claim the recipient had against some Minneapolis firm or corporation for personal injury.

The claim agent of the street-railway company in Duluth took a look at these letters.

"Two personal-injury suits on in Minneapolis, and now one against us," he remarked. "That's too many."

The man with the broken wrist gave his name as Adolph Faig, but the letters were addressed to Lester Edward Mills.

"I turn this man over to you," said Chief Troyer. "A fellow with all these personal-injury suits on has no need to be a burglar. He is wrongfully suspected of that crime."

Released by the Duluth police, Mr. Mills asked the Duluth Street Railway Company for $270. The company protracted the case, and when Mills left for Minneapolis, had him shadowed. Also his suits were looked up. The following record was unearthed:

June 27, 1913, Great Northern Road, $125.

September 5, 1913, Great Northern, $250.

December 29, 1913, Northern Pacific, $1,200.

May 6, 1914, Kennedy Brothers, 324 Nicollet Avenue, $400.

September 7, 1914, St. Paul Street Railway Company, $250.

Together with admissions made by Mills, this record was deemed sufficient to cause his arrest. He gave his address as 1604 Stevens Avenue. His wife gave hers as 86 Thirteenth Street, South. It was the hope of the prosecutors that the entire story of the performing wrist bone would be revealed in court, but this entertaining yarn was not to be told, for Mr. Mills pleaded guilty and Judge Leary sentenced him to not more than two and a half years in Stillwater.

He told the judge that fifteen years ago he broke his wrist in a fall and that ever since he has been able to throw it out of joint without pain or inconvenience. However, now that its owner is behind the bars, claim agents may laugh with impunity whenever the performing wrist bone pops out of joint.

Tells of Capture by the "Karlsruhe."

Since the German cruiser *Emden* was sunk after its many daring exploits at sea, interest has shifted to the other fast raider, the *Karlsruhe*, which, in the Atlantic, has been doing what the *Emden* did in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, capturing and sinking British and French merchant vessels.

The following graphic account of the capture of a British steamer by the "phantom of the sea" is given by an American woman, Mrs. Alphonse R. Hauschel, wife of the Buenos Aires representative of a farm-implement company, writing to a Chicago friend:

"After leaving Bahia last Friday, the gangways and landing for passengers were made fast because it was our last port of call in South America. We were off for Trinidad, a seven days' run. Saturday and Sunday passed pleasantly. Monday morning we were joined by the two fellow passengers in a game of deck golf. About 10:45 I happened to glance around to the other side of the deck from which we were playing and sighted two steamers in the distance. Finishing our game, we went to the other side of the deck to enjoy the sight of the approaching vessels, all wondering what they were. Numerous remarks, both amusing and alarming, were passed by the passengers; a few said it was a German warship and some claimed it must be one of the English cruisers that were patrolling the Brazilian coast. But the second steamer alarmed us all, though we afterward learned that it was only a collier.

"My, how those vessels flew through the water! At eleven-five our engine stopped, having been signaled to do so. As can be imagined, we had all been rather nervous and one of our pasengers said it must be a German cruiser, because he could tell by the installation of the wireless.

"It was not long before we knew the truth. It was the German cruiser *Karlsruhe*, which stopped and lowered a boat which was sent to our steamship, the *Van Dyck*. All eyes were turned on the approaching oarsmen, whom we watched pull up to our gangway, which was lowered.

"There were two officers and other officials and marines, all armed. A few carried bags to carry away the gold on board, which we were told amounted to $3,500. They took this money directly back to the *Karlsruhe*. The German officers and sailors were stationed at various posts on our ship and the wireless was destroyed. The operator told us that after sighting us the following message came through: 'Use your wireless and we will sink you.' The capture was completed at eleven-fifteen a. m. Soon after the vessel that accompanied the cruiser approached and was recognized as the former British steamer *Farn*, now used as a collier.

"A few hours later another steamer of the Hamburg-American Line appeared. During the afternoon two more steamers appeared, the *Asuncion* and the *Burstdale*. All of these steamers were in wireless communication, and the way in which they were strung out showed the wonderful organization of the Germans. The *Van Dyck* simply fell into a trap. Our position, when captured, was forty degrees forty-two minutes west and one degree fourteen minutes south, a little south of the equator.

"As the commanding officer mounted the gangway, he was met by our first officer. The German greeting was most cordial. They were all extremely polite and courteous; a fine lot of men. They greeted all of us with smiling faces, which made it hard to realize that we were in the enemy's hands. This helped us much to look on the brighter side of the situation and remember the oft-repeated proverb: 'All's fair in love and war.'

"We all hoped that they would take only our gold and a few provisions and let us proceed, as was the fate of the R. M. S. *Arlanza*. We soon learned, however, that that afternoon we were to pack all of our belongings and have them in readiness to be transshipped at six a. m. Tuesday morning to the *Asuncion*, our future home. We also learned that at two in the afternoon the passengers would be transferred. At twelve we all assembled in the lounge, and the captain came in and told us this news. It seemed brief, but they would not disclose further information.

"The Germans were so browned and sunburned. The poor fellows seemed to enjoy being among passengers again, and all looked for some one to talk with. Some

flew to the gymnasium to exercise a bit. They had been at sea since June, when they sailed from Hamburg. The *Karlsruhe* is one of the newest cruisers in the German navy, fast running, between twenty-five and thirty knots an hour, which accounts for her success in South American waters. The *Van Dyck* was her seventeenth capture, and the finest steamer by far, as well as the only large passenger steamer—most being cargo—so you can imagine how they gloated over their prize. I guess they looked forward to sinking her.

We had lunch as usual, after which we all disappeared to do our packing. We felt happy because all our baggage was going with us, and we could exclaim, 'Thank God, we are Americans!' which certainly was the reason for the kind treatment which we received.

"Monday night brought the expected condition, when the crew and a few of the stewards tried to raise a mutiny and attack the Germans on board. The *Van Dyck* men were actually armed, but the Germans quieted them down, stating that if they made any advance they would be shot.

"Tuesday morning, at five o'clock, the steward called all passengers to dress and to prepare their luggage for transshipping. At six all our trunks were on deck; all our boats were lowered, loading trunks and baggage to carry over to the *Asuncion*. We went on deck to watch the proceedings, until I saw soiled linen bags, trunks, suit cases, rolls of rugs and pillows fall into the water, to be hooked and reloaded and sent on their way. The only way to remain calm was not to look, for fear our baggage would meet the same fate.

"In chatting with the German officer, we learned that their torpedoes cost between four thousand and six thousand dollars, so I guess that's why they are not going to waste powder on the *Van Dyck*, but are going simply to sink her.

"After luncheon we were ready to leave the steamer. You can't imagine how I dreaded the trip to the other steamer, because of the swell. We all went down the gangplank, and were packed like sardines in the boat belonging to the *Asuncion*, whose sides had been covered with flags. A crew from the *Karlsruhe* rowed us over.

"What a trip that was! We rode the waves like a cork, and, believe me, I was the first one out. In all we had 510 passengers on this tiny steamer, forty-nine being passengers captured from other steamers. The captain of the *Asuncion* is such a fine fellow, and is doing all in his power to brighten us up.

"The *Asuncion* runs only eight miles an hour, and ever since we came on board we have been cruising around the equator, going about three miles an hour, taking a run of a few miles, turning around, going back and forth, just putting in time until the Germans transfer the cargo of 10,000 quarters of frozen beef to one of their captured steamers containing a chill room, after which they will sink the *Van Dyck*. We shall be on this steamer from Tuesday until Sunday, when we are due to embark at Para, Brazil."

Czar's Men Sleep on Snow.

The battles near Erzerum, which ended in the Russian Caucasian force driving the Turks back to their fortifications, were fought in bitterly cold weather. The Russian soldiers refused to pitch their tents for fear of attracting the attention of the enemy, and slept on tents spread on the snow.

Hunger and cold undermined the energy of the Turks, and they retreated in great disorder. Hundreds were frozen to death.

The Russian column in Asia Minor was delayed by mud on the slopes of Mount Ararat. Eventually the officers and men, by binding their boots with straw, succeeded in dragging the cannon to firmer ground.

Held for Trial in Canada.

Robert Sayre, recently arrested at Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, on a charge of high treason, has been committed for trial at the spring assizes of the high court of the Algoma district. Death is the penalty for high treason.

It is alleged that Sayre smuggled six Austrians from Canada into the United States, to aid them in returning to the fatherland. This was in violation of military restrictions established at the beginning of the European war over Germans and Austrians in this district.

Shooting Season Costs 111 Lives.

One hundred and eleven dead and 162 injured is the toll of the big-game-shooting season in seventeen States of the Union and one province of Canada. The season ended this week. Here is the death list:

Illinois, 3; Indiana, 0; Iowa, 1; Maine, 1; Massachusetts, 4; Michigan, 27; Minnesota, 12; Missouri, 1; New Hampshire, 3; New Jersey, 3; New York, 3; Ohio, 4; Oklahoma, 1; Pennsylvania, 11; Vermont, 5; Washington, 8; Wisconsin, 33; Ontario, 1.

Wounded German Helpless Three Drys.

The terrible plight of a German officer of dragoons on the battlefield is vividly described by the Cologne *Volkszeitung*.

While on patrol duty the officer received shots through both thighs. He fell from his horse and lay helpless all night in the field. He could see next morning that he was just between two battle lines, before him the French in trenches, and behind him the Germans.

Firing began on both sides. The infantry bullets flew over him and the German artillery began to shell the French trenches from a distance of about 4,000 meters. One German shrapnel bullet took away part of his right ear. His wounded legs, however, did not allow him to move. He had to wait until one of the two fighting lines repulsed the other.

The fighting lasted for three days and all the time the lieutenant lay between the uninterrupted firing from both sides. At length the Germans attacked and drove the French out of the trenches and he was at last picked up.

Hurling Arrows from Sky.

The warriors of the air continue to play an important part in the fighting in western Europe, and indications are that they will be heard of more from now on. Steel arrows similar to those of the French birdmen introduced early in the war are now being used by the Germans. The "Taubes," as the Kaiser's aëroplanes are called, fly over the Allies' lines frequently and drop the missiles of death. A soldier reports that the arrows "go clean through the roof and two floors of any house they strike."

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